THE

# NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

Arranged, Divided, and Briefly Characterized

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

Numerical Structure

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THE COVENANT HISTORY—Joshua to (2) Samuel

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# ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW :—
   1. Genesis.
   2. Exodus.
   3. Leviticus.
   4. Numbers.
   5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY :—
   1. Joshua.
   2. Judges.
      *Ruth.*
   3. Kings :—
      *First Book* (*Samuel*).
      *Second Book* (*Kings*).
   4. Captivity-Books :—
      *Ezra.*
      *Nehemiah.*
      *Esther.*
   5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS :—
   1. Isaiah.
   2. Jeremiah.
      *Lamentations.*
   3. Ezekiel.
   4. Daniel.
   5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—
      1. *Hosea.* *Amos.* *Micah.*
      2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
      3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
      4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. THE PSALM-BOOKS:—
   1. The Psalms.
   2. Job.
   3. Solomon's Song.
   4. Ecclesiastes.
   5. Proverbs.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE GOSPELS :—
   1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
   2. John.

2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES :—
   1. Romans. Galatians. Ephesians. Colossians. *Philemon.* Philippians.
   2. Thessalonians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Corinthians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Hebrews. Timothy. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES :—
   1. Peter.
      *First Epistle.*
      *Second Epistle.*
   2. James.
   3. John.
      *First Epistle.*
      *Second Epistle.*
      *Third Epistle.*
   4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

# THE SYMBOLISM OF THE NUMERALS.

TO avoid the necessity of reference to the first volume, the meanings of the numerals there more fully given are appended here, with some slight rectification and enlargement also, such as naturally grow out of longer use and investigation. The natural meaning always underlies the spiritual; and this harmony is the justification of the latter, showing the symbolism to be real.

There are but 7 to be considered really, 7 being the well known number of perfection, and 8 symbolizing what is new in contrast with the old, simply showing that the series does end with the former. Larger numbers are but, in their signification, compounds of the smaller ones: as ten = 5 × 2; twelve = 4 × 3; forty = 4 × 5 × 2. Those which cannot be multiplied need more inquiry to determine, as scripture methods must be learned from Scripture.

## *One.*

*One* always signifies unity, or primacy,—meanings strictly natural, but which may be applied variously, as is evident.

*It excludes another;* thus may speak of *soleness, singleness,* even of a single *state, barrenness.*

So, of *sufficiency,* competency without help of other, *power, omnipotence.*

Or, of *independency,* standing alone, whether competent or not: in a creature, *rebellion.*

Or, *unchangeableness, perpetuity, eternity,* as implied by these together: these are, in fact, but oneness in successive time.

It excludes *difference:* if altogether, this is *identity; truth* is identity of the affirmation with the fact.

If *internal* difference, then we have *harmony of parts or attributes, consistency, congruity, righteousness,* which is moral congruity with position; *integrity,* which is "wholeness, oneness."

If external difference, and in various aspects, *agreement, concord, peace,* the being at one.

All these are but, in different ways, the same idea fundamentally, and no doubt the number of its expressions might be increased; but "one" may stand also for its ordinal, *first,* primacy:—

Thus in time, the *beginning,* which may be, as with God, *causative,* and so speak of "source, cause, origin, paternity," easily passing into the thought of *supremacy, sovereignty, headship;* while in connection with *mind* it implies "plan, counsel, election, will."

## *Two.*

*Two* is fundamentally the opposite of one: there *is* now another. Hence it speaks of *difference;* which in deepening grades becomes "con-

trast, opposition, conflict, enmity." It is the first number which *divides:* sin, evil, Satan's work, come naturally in under these heads.

This is the bad sense; in the good, however, it is equally significant. This our word "seconding" conveys in its main features. Analyzed, this gives as the first thought that of *help*, and along with this that of *taking an inferior place:* thus "salvation, ministry, service, humiliation," alike would come under it. Again, as "the testimony of *two* men is true,"—the one confirming the other,—so the number symbolizes "witness, the word." But this is connected also with the thought of *two*, side by side simply; and here we have "relation, fellowship," and, not far off from these, "addition, increase, growth." As a product of these thoughts (relation, addition, and the inferior place,) we get the further thoughts of "dependence, faith."

"It will be observed how these various meanings unite in Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, the second Man, and uniting these two natures, the divine and the human, in His own person,—the Saviour humbling Himself to death to serve us"; the true Witness also, and the "Leader and Finisher of faith."

Again, "death is *division, separation*, the last enemy; yet the death of the cross, in which the conflict between good and evil rose to its height, is once again salvation. Nowhere is there so great a contrast, such apparent contradiction, as in the Cross."

"Woman illustrates, too, this number, full of contrasts as she is: dependent on man, but his help-meet; the type of increase, yet through whom came sin, death, and, yet again, through her victorious 'Seed,' salvation."

Finally, the law, the legal covenant, comes under this number.

## *Three.*

*Three* is the symbol of cubic measure, solid measure, solidity: it stands for what is solid, real, substantial,—for fullness, actuality. Three is the number of Persons in the Godhead, and with this alone God is fully manifested. The Holy Ghost, the third Person, realizes in the creature the counsels of God. Sanctification is His special work.

The sanctuary, God's dwelling-place, is a cube; the final city, which the glory of God lightens, is a cube: "the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." In the sanctuary God manifests Himself; in resurrection, too, He is manifested: therefore resurrection is on the third day. "Renewal, recovery, remembrance," connect with this. *Glory* is the manifestation of God, and *heaven* His sanctuary; worship and praise glorify Him.

*Possession, dwelling-place*, seem to come under this number; and *fruit* manifests the tree.

## *Four.*

*Four* is the first number which allows simple division; as *two* is the number which divides it. It is the symbol of *weakness*, therefore; and we are now outside the numbers which speak of God: we have here, then, the *creature* in contrast with the Creator. In Scripture, 4 divides either as 3 + 1, the numbers of manifestation and creative sovereignty,

God being seen in the work of His hand; or it divides as $2 \times 2$, true division, and significant of strife and evil.

Four is also the number of the four corners of the earth, of *earthly* completeness and universality, which has still on it the stamp of weakness. It is the number of the four winds of heaven, the various and opposing influences of which the earth is the scene. Thus we have the thoughts of *testing* and *experience*, which with man connect themselves so constantly with *failure*. The earth-walk comes thus naturally under this number.

## *Five.*

"In the cleansing of the leper and the consecration of the priest alike, the blood is put upon three parts of man which together manifest what he is,—the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, the great toe of the right foot. By the ear he is to receive the word of God; with the hand, to do the enjoined work; with the foot, to walk in His blessed ways. This is evidently man in his whole *responsibility*.

"Each of these parts is stamped with the number 5.

"The ear is the avenue to the higher part, and there are just *five* such senses, by which man is connected with the scene around,—the avenues of perception by which alone he can be appealed to.

"The hand of man is that by which he moulds and fashions the natural world around him. It is the expression of active power,—the four fingers, with the opposing thumb, the consecrated because the governing part. These on the two hands give *ten*, the number of the commandments in the two tables of the law, the measure of natural responsibility.

"The foot, the expression of personal conduct (the walk), gives a similar division, much less marked however; and the *two* feet a similar ten. Five stands thus as the number of man, exercised and responsible under the government of God."

Notice how carefully man's power is characterized as creature, dependent power. His hand is the instrument of it as the vicegerent of God in the world; no beast has in any proper sense a hand. Yet the power is in no way like divine power,—simple and without effort, but a co-operation of forces, in which (as he recognizes) "union is strength:" the *four* fingers, every way significant of weakness, helped by the single, strong opposing thumb; the two hands also assisting one another.

Agreeing with this, Scripture commonly shows us 5 as $4 + 1$, that is, man the creature in connection with the Almighty God his Ruler yet his Helper. Here the divine ways yet give him constant and needed exercise, and 5 will be found often associated with this thought of *exercise under responsibility*, but also with the kindred one, that man's way (4) under the control of God (1) according to its character leads to its ordained end. "Recompense, capacity, responsibility" are the most common thoughts connected with the number 5.

But "man in relation with God" spells in a higher sense "Emmanuel," and points once more to Christ.

## *Ten.*

*Ten* is only the double *five*: I can see no real difference.

## *Six.*

*Six* is the second number capable of true division. Divided, its factors are 2 and 3, which easily yield the thought of the *manifestation* (*or fullness*) *of evil*, or of the enemy's work. But evil is weakness, as again this divisibility teaches; and as such it must yield to God. Read in a good sense, the number of conflict (2) brings forth from it sanctification and the glory of God (3).

It is the number of man's *work-day week*, the appointed time of his labor, the type of his life-labor, his few and evil days, limited because of sin.

In its full meaning it speaks of sin in full development, limited and controlled by God, who glorifies Himself in the issue of it. The thoughts of *discipline*, and of *mastery*,—overcoming—will be found under this number.

## *Seven and Twelve.*

*Seven* is well known as the number of perfection, and so of rest. But it may be applied to evil, and simply show "completeness" of any kind.

*Twelve* is in Scripture as commonly divided into $4 \times 3$ as *seven* is into $4 + 3$. The factors are the same; but whereas in the one case they are added, in the other they are multiplied. Seven and twelve should be in some sense, therefore, allied in meaning. It is only in the *relation* of its factors to one another that 12 differs from 7: "the number of the world and that of divine manifestation characterize it; but these are not (as in 7) side by side merely. It is God manifesting Himself in relation to the world of His creation, as 7 is, but now in active energy laying hold of and transforming it. Thus 12 is the number of manifest sovereignty, as it was exercised in Israel, for instance, by the Lord in the midst of them, or as it will be exercised in the world to come.

Turn now to the complete rest of the people of God,—to the 'new Jerusalem' which has the glory of God, whose light God is, and the Lamb the lamp of it; to which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. Here perfection and rest are found, if anywhere; the thought connected, as abundantly plain, with 7: yet what do we find? Look at the foundations of the city: they are *twelve* in number. Look at the gates: there are *twelve* gates. Measure the city: its length, breadth, and height, are equal,—*twelve* thousand furlongs each. Measure the height of the wall, 144 cubits—$12 \times 12$. Behold the tree of life planted by the river that issues from the throne of God: it bears *twelve* manner of fruits, and yields its fruit every month—12 times a year. Everywhere this number 12 meets us where we might expect to find the 7. It has the factors of 7; it is, as it were, the expansion of 7; and the spiritual idea which shines through it, that God is everywhere the manifest Ruler, what does it speak of to our hearts but complete subjection to Him, which is indeed the perfection of the creature, and its rest?"*

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 74, 75. The application of numbers to the interpretation of nature I have sought to give in the book quoted here.

# INTRODUCTION

TO THE

# Second Pentateuch of the Old Testament:

# The Covenant-History.

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### The Arrangement of the Books as here given.

HAVING concluded, through the mercy of God, the five books of Moses, or of the Law, ordinarily known as "the fivefold book," or Pentateuch, we now enter upon what is in fact a second Pentateuch, answering in its main divisions to the first, not only in the number of books, but in their character also.

The historical books of the Old Testament, outside of the books of Moses, form a most natural division of it, and their unity in this way one would think impossible to be questioned did we not know that in fact among the Jews generally another order obtains. This we must consider presently. The order in our Bibles is that of the Septuagint, and we assume it for the present as the true one. According to this, there are nine historical books which follow Deuteronomy; but these fall easily into five divisions, Ruth being but a supplement to Judges, Samuel and Kings giving together the history of the monarchy, with the events which gave it birth, while the three books of the captivity, or the times of subjection to Gentile rule, similarly come together. Thus we have,—

1. Joshua.
2. Judges, with Ruth.
3. The Books of the Kings (Samuel and Kings).
4. The Books of the Captivity (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther).
5. Chronicles.

But according to the rule (which we need not now undertake to establish) of numerical structure, it is not a mere division into five parts

that can satisfy us. It must be shown that these fill severally the place assigned to each by the significance of the numbers, the order being the necessary historical one, except that Chronicles comes last, as in fact a *resumé* of the history, with a very distinct moral attaching,—one may almost say, a judicial summing up.

Now this last is Deuteronomic in character, and at once confirms the place of Chronicles as the fifth and final division of a Pentateuchal series. The captivity books preceding it perhaps as plainly fill the fourth place; Israel being now in what Ezekiel calls "the wilderness of the peoples" (Ezek. xx. 35), under the power of the world, which God had put into the hands of the Gentiles. We have still three other divisions to account for. Of these, *Joshua* would stand as the Genesis; and we shall find in it, little as at first it would appear so, much of the fullness of Genesis,—of course, under the vail of type, which is common to all the Old-Testament histories.

The first book of Scripture is, as such, the introduction to the whole: Joshua is but the introduction to the history of Israel in possession of the land (the book of Esther being the only and brief exception for a special purpose). But to this history Joshua is as really the introduction as Genesis to the whole, and this is plain. It answers well, moreover, to its numerical place, as showing divine power acting according to promise for the people, who are at present, on the whole, obedient. *Judges* is farther from the breadth of Exodus than Joshua from that of Genesis: all through, we are on narrower ground. It is the little book of *Ruth*, which, in perfect keeping with the character of the legal covenant, brings in as a supplement, and under a vail, *in connection with the genealogy of David*, and thus of David's Son and antitype, the story of redemption by a Kinsman-Redeemer. Deliverances there are all through the book of Judges; but the picture is one rather of Canaanite alliances,—of breach, therefore, with God, Israel's unity broken up, —nay, man sundered from man. Of this double breach, the two supplements are the illustration: chaps. xvii., xviii. giving the establishment of idolatry early in the tribe of Dan; the three following ones, the social disorder, in the crime at Gibeah and the war with Benjamin. Nothing certainly could more truly fill its numerical place than does Judges. There remain only the books of the *Kings*, which include, as a first book, *Samuel*. This is the third section here; and as compared with Judges, it is, as to the first part, a real resurrection-history, though ending inevitably in the ruin and dispersion of the people. In inseparable connection with the Judah-dynasty of David's house, we have the history of the sanctuary—the dwelling-place and throne of God, which the king in Israel, only as His vice-gerent, filled (1 Chron. xxix. 23). This gives its significance to these books, Samuel giving the tabernacle-period, Kings the temple, the subversion of which by Nebuchadnezzar brings the section to a close.

## Their Place in the Hebrew Canon.

Thus, while as history these books fill their place, and are (except, for a plain reason, Chronicles,) in necessary chronological order, the five divisions into which they fall are confirmed and explained by the numerical structure, which, in common with all Scripture, they thus exhibit. But we cannot pass on until we have fairly looked at and answered as we may the objection that will be raised on the ground of the different arrangement of the Hebrew canon. Is this authoritative? and if not, is there any that is so?

A reader of our English Bible finds one invariable arrangement of the books throughout, and is naturally apt to think this as much inspired as are the books themselves; but this is only the result of such a uniformity of copies as has been brought about by printing. The order in our books is, in general, as to the Old Testament, the order of the Septuagint, the Greek translation, which was in general use in our Lord's time among those that spoke Greek. But this is very naturally spoiled, for many, by the introduction of apocryphal books among the canonical ones. The Hebrew has also, as being such, quite intelligibly, the preference in the minds of most. In the Hebrew arrangement, there is a classification of books under three heads,—"the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings." Here, the Prophets come next to the Law,—*i. e.*, the five books of Moses; but the four historical books—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings,—these, and no more than these,—are counted among these as "*former* prophets," clearly upon the ground of their being presumed to be written by such. The rest of these are referred to the *Kethubim*, or "Writings," as well as Daniel and Lamentations from the Prophets; and the "Writings" fall thus into three divisions: first, the Psalms, Proverbs, Job; secondly, the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; thirdly, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

The three great classes here are thought to be recognized by our Lord Himself in Luke xxiv. 44, where He says to His disciples that "all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Me." Here, there are three divisions; and the Prophets come, as in the Hebrew, before the Psalms. This much is clear; but it is not certain, from this, that He meant to put the historical books among the prophets, nor would they come so naturally to be mentioned where He is speaking of fulfillment of prophecy. And again, the mention of the "Psalms" still less sanctions the whole division of *Kethubim*, strangely composite as it is. The numerical arrangement recognizes the divisions in general, and the order, as the Lord appears to do, while it restores the two prophetic books to what surely seems their natural place, and the five historical books also to their natural connections.

How clear the place of Daniel is may be seen by considering that his

book stands *fourth* of the greater prophets, and that he is correspondingly the prophet of the world-empires,—that is, of Israel in subjection to Gentile rule, as Ezra and Nehemiah are the historians of the same period. Among the minor prophets, which are twelve in number, and like most Scripture twelves, a $4 \times 3$, the *fourth* triad—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are, again, representatives of the "times of the Gentiles."

Thus the Hebrew divisions and order, with the single exception of the Prophets preceding what we may fittingly call "the experience books," seem to transgress the natural; nor can any commentators justify them as a whole. Delitzsch, as good an authority on such matters as can be found perhaps, writes thus in his commentary upon Job:—

"As the work of the Chokma [the didactic class], the book of Job stands, with the three other works belonging to this class of the Israelitish literature, among the Hagiographa, which are called in Hebrew simply the *Kethubim*. Thus, by the side of the Law and the Prophets, the third division of the canon is styled, in which are included all those writings belonging neither to the province of prophetic history nor prophetic declaration. Among the Hagiographa are writings even of a prophetic character, as Psalms and Daniel, but their writers are not properly *prophets*. [?] At present, Lamentations stands among them, but this is not its original place; as also Ruth appears to have stood originally between Judges and Samuel. *Both Lamentations and Ruth are placed among Hagiographa, that there the so-called* MEGILLOTH, *or scrolls, may stand together;* the Song of Songs, the feast-book of the eighth passover-day; Ruth, that of the second Shabuoth-day; Lamentations, that of the ninth of Ab; Ecclesiastes, that of the eighth tabernacle-day; Esther, that of Purim . . . . The position which [the book of Job] occupies is, moreover, a *very shifting one.* In the Alexandrine canon, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, follow the four books of the Kings. The historical books, therefore, stand, from the earliest to the latest, side by side; then begins, with Job, Psalms, Proverbs, a new row, opened with these three, in stricter sense, poetical books. Then Melito of Sardis, in the second century, places Chronicles with the books of Kings, but arranges immediately after them the non-historical Hagiographa in the following order: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Job. Here the Solomonic writings are joined to the Davidic psalter, and the anonymous book of Job stands last. In our editions of the Bible, the Hagiographa division begins with Psalms, Proverbs, Job, (the succession peculiar to MSS. of the German class); in the Talmud, with Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs; in the Masora, and in MSS. of the Spanish class, with Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs. All these modes of arrangement are well considered."

They are at least very instructive, as they show us how little divine authority was even *supposed* to be in any one of them. They show us, moreover, how the original arrangement had been broken through, as in the case of the five Megilloth so called, for mere liturgic purposes. Thus we are surely free to accept an arrangement which, while it is substantially that of the Septuagint and of our present Bibles, seems to be as natural as it is conformable to the character and requirements of numerical structure.

It is indeed said of the five books which have been thus displaced

from the "prophetic" histories that they "are at once distinguished from the above-mentioned prophetic-historic writings by this characteristic, that they treat only of single parts of the history of the covenant-people from individual points of view." (*Keil.*) But this writer sees only in the book of Ruth "a charming historical picture from the life of the ancestors of King David." In his introduction to the book itself, he seems, indeed, on the point of discovering the higher significance; he says, "*But there is also a Messianic trait* in the fact that Ruth, a heathen woman, of a nation so hostile to the Israelites as that of Moab was, should have been thought worthy to be made the tribe-mother of the great and pious King David, on account of her faithful love to the people of Israel, and her entire confidence in Jehovah, the God of Israel." And he even notices the appearance of her name with those of Tamar and Rahab in the genealogy of the Lord in Matthew. Yet, from regarding the book as mere literal history, he does not see the really prophetic character which the typical, and therefore most spiritual, side of the book presents, and so gives it its place as little more than anecdotal among the *Kethubim.*

We hope to look more fully at the place and connection of the other books thus degraded, with Ruth, from their true rank as prophetic history. But we may clearly see how in this way their whole character is lowered, and orthodox commentators (such as Keil is) have undesignedly favored low views of inspiration by their mere and excessive literality. Let it be reiterated and emphasized here, that while Scripture history is, on the one hand, always true history, it is, on the other, *never simply that.* It is ALWAYS prophetic—having to do with Christ, and the divine purposes of which He is the centre; and the typical view—or what Paul calls (Gal. iv. 24) the "allegorizing" of the history—is pre-eminently that which lifts it up to its true plane, and so gives it its full value. While the complete and connected scheme which these histories, so interpreted, develop gives the most absolute conviction that the allegoric meaning is not something foisted upon them by human imagination, but innate and essential and divine. Those who do not receive it dishonor, and are compelled to dishonor, Scripture, and thus give the so-called "higher criticism" its fullest justification.

## HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE HEXATEUCH.

WE have now reached a place from which it will be most convenient to review the pretensions of what assumes to be the "higher" criticism; lofty enough indeed in these, and manifesting abundantly the spirit of the latter days,—days which Scripture characterizes with sufficient plainness. To its advocates, that it should manifest this will not even be a reproach; for nothing is more the boast of these latter times than the scientific spirit, and here is but in their eyes the scientific spirit

in religion: where should it be more needful? The spirit of science being to-day evolutionist, the higher criticism will be found to be little else than Darwinism (morals and all) in another sphere,—a sphere which, so much the more important as it is, craves the more for it an earnest examination.

It is the well-known characteristic of Darwinism, that it substitutes a theory of the *how* for the *why*, with the effect of removing the appearance of design from nature. What appears like design may be but a consequence of the mode or conditions of production,—a *consequence*, not a *cause;* and the universe be the result of the operation of natural laws, apart from all supernatural superintendence or interference. As Huxley says, "For the notion that every organism has been created as it is, and launched straight at a purpose, Mr. Darwin substitutes the conception of something which may be fairly termed a method of trial and error. Organisms vary incessantly; of these variations, the few meet with surrounding conditions which suit them, and thrive; the many are unsuited and become extinguished." It is on account of this elimination of design out of the world that skeptics and materialists range themselves so unanimously under the leadership of Darwin; and this they proclaim a distinguished merit of his scheme. Others have, of course, taken it up who can by no means be classed with these, and thus it has received various modifications. But the original vice of the thing manifests itself through all, as far as possible from the spirit of Scripture, the attempt, which we have even been told is "the *duty* of the man of science, to *push back* the Great First Cause in time as far as possible." The beauty and blessedness of Scripture consists in its persistent effort to bring God *nigh*.

It is certainly a bold and subtle plan of the enemy to import in this sense the scientific spirit into Scripture itself, to fix our minds upon theories of its production which are proclaimed incapable of damage to our faith because merely that, until we find that unawares we have indeed "pushed back" God far into the distance. The "higher" criticism, as distinct from that of textual integrity, concerns itself, it is said, only with questions of "authorship, etc." *—where the "etc." will be found much the most important part—of the Bible books. "Its conclusions," says Prof. Driver, "affect not the *fact* of revelation, but only its *form*. They help to determine the stages through which it passed, the different phases which it assumed, and the process by which the record of it was built up. They do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the scriptures of the Old Testament. They imply no change in respect to the divine attributes revealed in the Old Testament, no change in the lessons of human duty to be derived from it, no change as to the general position (apart from the interpretation of

*Sanday: "The Oracles of God," p. 30.

particular passages) that the Old Testament points forward prophetically to Christ.*"

Harmless as it thus looks, it is an admitted fact that the patchwork theory which the higher criticism accepts was born of infidelity, cradled in rationalism, and is to this day claimed rightly by professors of it such as Kuenen, for whom "the Israelitish religion is one of the principal religions,—nothing less, but also nothing more:" a "manifestation of the religious spirit of mankind." The babe has been stolen, taught a somewhat different accent, smuggled in among Christians, and passed off as Christian; but though made to appear lamblike, its voice is still the dragon's. Even as interpreted by Dr. Driver, it can contradict Christ to the face, as where, in His application of the hundred and tenth psalm to Himself He avers that "David in spirit calls Him Lord," while the higher criticism says, "This psalm, though it may be ancient, *can hardly* have been composed by David."† But, indeed, everywhere it contradicts Christ, who says, and just of these Old-Testament books, "Scripture cannot be broken" (Jno. x. 35), while these men are continually, to their own satisfaction, proving that it can, and their system could not be maintained apart from this.

The very criteria by which they distinguish the different documents that make up, for instance, the book of Genesis, involve the idea of contradictory statements, too inconsistent to be from one hand. Thus the order of creation in the second narrative (chap. ii. 4–6, *seq.*) is said to be "evidently opposed to the order indicated in chap. i."‡ True, the editor who, in their conception of the matter, put them together, did not see it, and thus has left (happily for them) the seams of his patchwork visible, when once the critical eye rests upon it. So the narrative of the deluge, where in one document "of every clean beast *seven* are to be taken into the ark, while in vi. 19 (*cf.* vii. 15) *two* of every sort, without distinction, are prescribed."§ Again: "The section xxvii. 46–xxviii. 9 differs appreciably in style from xxvii. 1–45, and at the same time exhibits Rebekah as influenced by a different motive in suggesting Jacob's departure from Canaan,—not to escape his brother's anger, but to procure a wife agreeable to his parents' wishes. Further, we find two explanations of the origin of the name '*Bethel;*' two of '*Israel:*' xxxii. 3, xxxiii. 16, Esau is described as already resident in Edom, while xxxvi. 6, *seq.*, his migration thither is attributed to causes which could only have come into operation after Jacob's return to Canaan."‖

"Scripture cannot be broken"?—why, here it *is* broken! All these are plainly given as statements contradictory of one another; for that is the only reason why one writer should not be supposed to have written them all. It is easier to suppose an editor who put them together not perceiving the contradiction between them, although

*Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament." Preface, p. xi.
†Introduction, p. 362, *n.* ‡p. 7. §p. 7. ‖p. 8.

strangely too, as none of these statements lie very far apart. But Scripture *can*, then, be broken: and "if we are forced to answer" how the Lord could make such mistakes as these, Dr. Sanday tells us piously "that the explanation must lie in the fact that He of whom we are speaking is not only God, but Man. The error of statement would belong in some way to the humanity and not to the divinity"! *

Can, then, He who for Christians is the Great Teacher, and who claims to be in some sense the only one (Matt. xxiii. 8) lead us astray? To prove the possibility, Dr. Sanday stamps the expression He uses, "He maketh the sun to rise" as "*imperfect science*" (!) and to those who, timidly enough, "maintain that questions relating to the authorship of the Old Testament touch more nearly the subject-matter of Revelation," he puts the question, "Are these distinctions valid? Are they valid enough to be insisted upon so strongly as they must be if the arguments based upon them are to hold good?"

He answers for himself: "I greatly doubt it;" and by and by undertakes to read us a lecture on humility: "In regard to these questions, I think we shall do better to ponder the words of the psalm, —'Lord, I am not high-minded; I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself on great matters which are too high for me.'" (!!)

So Scripture is broken, and we must not be so haughty as to defend it. Dr. Sanday, with all the scientists of the day, have expunged the word "sunrise" from their dictionary, and of course never use it. Scripture, even in its most positive assertions may mislead us; only let us talk piously: "I should be loth to believe"—notice, my reader, it is Dr. Sanday who would be "*loth to believe* that our Lord *accommodated* His language to current notions, knowing them to be false. I prefer to think, as it has been happily worded, that He '*condescended* not to know.'"

Piously, however, or impiously, it is the same thing in result: Scripture has passed out of our hands. Even the author we have quoted confesses, as to these changes in men's thoughts about it, that "it must be admitted frankly that they *involve a loss*. . . . In old days, it was very much as with the Jews in the time of our Lord. When any question arose of doctrine or practice, all that was needed was to turn the pages of Scripture until one came to a place which bore upon the point at issue. This was at once applied just as it stood, without hesitation and without misgiving." † Dr. Sanday owns that this, according to their view, is gone, although he is not so candid as he seems, when he tells us *how far* it is gone. It is *not* merely that "the inquirer feels bound, not only to take the passage along with its context," which was always true, nor even "also to ask, Who was the author? when did he write? and with what stage in the history of revelation is the particular utterance connected?"—questions, some of them,

* Oracles, p. 10. † Oracles, p. 76.

which have no likelihood of being ever answered,—the much deeper question is now, Is the utterance true? and instead of our becoming as "babes" to have divine things revealed to us, we must be learned men, and that to no ordinary extent, in order to pass judgment upon the mingled truth and error presented in Scripture! By and by, Dr. Sanday hopes, with the help of specialists who are devoting themselves to this, we shall have an annotated—really, a purged—Bible, which will make things easier for simple souls. Practically, thus, another great principle that our Lord announces is taken from us. Scripture becomes like a morass—with firm footing, indeed, somewhere, if I could only find it; but, alas! without help, I cannot even know what is firm from what is treacherous! We are not to be delivered from the necessity of faith: "I, like them,"—the intelligent among his audience—"must take a great deal upon trust,"* says Dr. Sanday; but it is trust in the *competency of the critics!* The "open Bible" of which we have boasted is to be taken from us, and that more completely than by Romanism itself.

As to the historical books of the Old Testament, with which we are now concerned, they are, according to this view, "in many parts," (*how* many, we have no means of knowing, it would seem,) "*traditions*, in which the original representation has been insensibly modified, and sometimes (especially in the later books,) *colored* by the associations of the age in which the author recording it lived." No wonder, then, "(2) that some freedom was used by ancient historians in placing speeches or discourses in the mouths of historical characters. In some cases, no doubt, such speeches agreed substantially with what was actually said; but often they merely develop at length, in the style and manner of the narrator, what was handed down only as a compendious report, or what was deemed to be consonant with the temper and aim of a given character on a particular occasion. No satisfactory conclusions with respect to the Old Testament will be arrived at without due account being taken of these two principles"!†

"Scripture cannot be broken"!—how far have we got away from this! Perhaps, however, the Lord never said that. Perhaps it is some chronicler of a tradition, piecing and patching some musty manuscripts, who put that sentence into His mouth? They were very little careful about such things, those old historians. Man had not developed, at that age of the world, into the moral being that he is to-day. The criticism of the New Testament is steadily progressing. Völter, Visher, Weizäcker, Pfleiderer, hailing from authoritative German universities, have shown us, but a short time since, the composite character of the Apocalypse. Steck has done the same for the epistle to the Galatians, and has proved, to his own satisfaction, that neither this nor Corinthians nor Romans is of Pauline origin. Völler has found later still that Romans is made up of no less than seven different epistles; Spitta, only

* "Oracles," p. 7. † Driver, "Introduction," pref. xiii. *n.*

the year before last, that the Acts consists of two accounts, put together by a "redactor."* All these are Germans, are professors, or at least students, of colleges, and *of course*, competent men! Is it not safer to withdraw, while there is yet time to do so with honor, from the extreme position of verbal inspiration which all these and a host of others so determinedly attack? Is it not more reverent to believe that the Lord did not vouch for this, which, after all, these learned men cannot accept as fact?

Well, what is left us? It is impossible just yet to know. We shall, of course, have the *criticisms* left; but even the value of these is doubtful. Certainly, "to the poor," *their* gospel *cannot* be preached. With all their wisdom, they cannot distinguish a stone from bread, and know nothing of the need of the human heart,—of the sickening sense of having only uncertainty when the future is to be faced,—of the awful silence in the soul when what was held for the voice of God has died out of it. Is there no possibility of distinguishing what is really that from every merely human voice whatever? Drs. Sanday, Driver, and many of their fellows agree that He has spoken; but it is something in the air, which has not shaped itself in definite words: the *words* are *human!* Yes, and is there no possibility that He who *became* man, in His desire to be with us,—if that is among the things left still,—can speak *definitely* in a human voice? Oh, if I must yet "take a great deal upon trust," may I not trust this wondrous book, which, like the Unchangeable in whose name it speaks, is the Past in a living Present, rather than all the opinions of all the critics in the world? Can they reconstruct this life pervading it, which their dissections in vain search after? Can they give me, with all their wisdom, another Bible, or add a book to it, even? No, they cannot; and by that fact, Scripture is shown more authoritative than its would-be judges. I may have here to "take a great deal upon trust," but it is a trust which heart and conscience approve, and which gives rest and satisfaction to them. It has the witness of centuries to it, and of adoring multitudes in every century, who in every circumstance have found faith in the Bible the one thing sufficing them. Are these modern critics more to be believed than the living Christ this book has given me? No, says my highest reason;—no, ten thousand times: it is here I trust alone,—with the faith of a little child, if you will,—trust and rest here.

But we need not be afraid of their arguments. As with evolution in its other branches, the facts which the higher criticism produces—so long as they *are* facts,—are always interesting, and can be read with profit in the light of the "why." The "why"—the design—reveals the heart of the designer; and where the "how," if it can be ascertained, and while it is connected with this, may illustrate the wisdom of the designer, the purpose in it exhibits him in his whole moral character.

* Prof. Jacobus, in *The Hartford Seminary Record.*

If there is no design, the mere "how" of accomplishment is utterly trivial. If the apparent footprint in the sand be not human, and my solitude is to find no relief, how much to me is it to learn how winds and waves have mocked me? But think of men being frenzied with delight in being able to show that what seems *mind* in all around is not that, and that chance really rules in all the law and order that exist! This most certain truth that chance is nowhere makes every fact at once of interest: they are real footprints that are round about me,—and not of a human comforter, but a *divine!*

How many hands have contributed to make up Scripture is a thing with which Scripture itself does not concern itself or occupy us. Of the writers of most of the historical books we have no real knowledge; and if Moses compiled Genesis from existing records, such as are referred to in some of the later books, there would be nothing at all in this to stumble us. We are only concerned to know that where Moses is credited, in either Old or New Testament, with writing or speaking, —this, with all the rest, is absolutely true and trustworthy. But this is entirely contrary to Prof. Driver's canon, without which he thinks no satisfactory conclusions can be reached as to the Old Testament. Traditions, modified and colored by the historian, and interspersed with speeches fictitious to whatever extent one may desire,—this is what he conceives it to be.

The facts upon which the document-theory is founded are, as I have said, interesting where they *are* facts. Often they are not. The linguistic argument (or that from characteristic words,) has been well refuted by Vos,* and his book is accessible to all who desire it. The argument from discrepancies may be found, in part, there also. The few specimens already given from Driver are as forcible as most, and the readers of the present book can be at little loss to answer them. It is not difficult to see that the order of creation in the second chapter of Genesis is, so far as the plants and beasts are concerned, not an order at all; that the specification of pairs of living creatures in God's first communication to Noah is in no wise inconsistent with an after-specification of sevens for beasts that were clean; that Rebekah, just like one of ourselves, might easily have had a double motive for sending Jacob to Laban; while Esau's having been in Edom before Jacob's return to Canaan would not in the least affect the question of a later and final return thither. The double naming of Bethel and of Israel, glanced at in our notes (vol. i., p. 99), has a special significance, of which the higher criticism in general, being of the earth earthy, takes no account.

For any detailed reply to criticisms of this sort it would be impossible to find room here. The facility with which they can be made is as insnaring to those who would gain a cheap reputation as it is condemnatory of the whole. There is probably no book that could not be

*Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuchal Codes." By Geerhardus Vos, N. Y.

cut up after the same fashion, and the smaller the fragments the more readily can it be done. A single verse, thus, in a section pronounced "Elohistic," if it has the name of Jehovah, proves itself to be from a "Jehovistic" source; and we have such dissections as this of Gen. xxx. from Prof. Driver, where verses 1–3$^a$, 6, 8, 17–20$^a$, 20$^c$–23, are given as Elohistic, so called from the use in it of "Elohim" (God), while the rest, including a fragment from the middle of the 20th verse, is Jehovistic!

Such attempts practiced upon any other book would find speedy and scornful relegation to the limbo of conceits that perish in their birth. Only the wondrous life of the book itself seems as if it kept alive the very enemies that seek its destruction. The interests that are involved beget an interest in the attack upon them; and in a world which has held the cross, the carnal mind still shows itself as enmity against God. As has been said, no detail can be ventured upon here,—and in truth the detail would be terribly wearisome; but we may look a little at the broad features of what is proposed to us as the Bible of the future, so far as it affects what we have already had before us.

We are to have no longer a Pentateuch, nor any books of Moses. Moses' part in the laws of Israel is an undefined and ever-vanishing quantity. The extreme party of critics cannot, of course, allow Israel to be any exception to the law of development which ordains man to have struggled on and up from the level of his ape-like ancestors unaided by any revelation of God. Prof. Toy, of Harvard, outlines the "History of the Religion of Israel" after this manner:—

"A comparatively large law-book was written (Deuteronomy, about B. C. 622); and this, in accordance with the ideas of the times, which demanded the authority of ancient sages and lawgivers, was ascribed to Moses . . . After various law-books had been written, they were all gathered up, sifted, and edited about the time of Ezra (B.C. 450), as one book. This is substantially our present Law (*Tora*), or Pentateuch. (*pp.* 6, 7.)

"Nations do not easily change their gods; it is not likely that Moses could or would introduce a new deity. But as the Israelites believed that he had made some great change, it may be that through his means the worship of Yahwe [Jehovah] became more general—became, in fact, in a real sense, the national worship. This would not necessarily mean that no other deities were worshiped . . . . Still less would it mean that there was only one God,—that is, that all other pretended gods were nothing. This is what we believe, and what the later Israelites (about the time of the exile and on) believed; but David, and generations after him, thought that Kemosh and Dagon and the rest were real gods, only not the gods of Israel. Exactly what Moses' belief was we do not know. (*p.* 24.)

"If we cannot suppose that the Pentateuch is correct history, then we do not know precisely what Moses did for his people . . . From all that we do know, we are led to believe that what Moses did was rather to organize the people, and give them an impulse in religion, than to frame any code of laws, or make any great change in their institutions." *

*Quoted from Dr. Armstrong's "Nature and Revelation."

The Harvard professor goes on to tell us that "we" know now that God did *not* give Israel the law at Sinai; but so long as we refuse that, he will allow us to believe that "the people, or a part of them, may have stayed there awhile." Moses' part in it all, he tells us, matters very little.

This is, of course, more than "down-grade:" it is near the bottom of the descent. Dr. Driver does not mean to land there. We do not always see where the road ends, and the mercy of God may prevent such a catastrophe; but there is, in fact, no practicable halting-place short of this. Between Dr. Toy and orthodoxy there is every degree of errancy, and the voices of the critics are not a little confused. It is contended that they are becoming more harmonious; and this, no doubt, is true and to be expected. The stream would naturally wear for itself channels, within which it would be henceforth confined. Some errors would be too manifest to be upheld, and others be found inconsistent with the purpose they were used for. This unification of the critics, while it will enable their arguments to be more concisely dealt with, does not imply any bettering of their position from the Scripture standpoint: the fact is the reverse; the tendency of error is to gravitate, and consistency necessitates ever a more complete departure from the truth. Thus Kuenen and Wellhausen, who are not badly represented by Prof. Toy, give us the latest phase of the documentary hypothesis. And it is striking enough to find how largely Driver builds to-day upon their foundations.

Yet it is plain that even for him the distinction between Jehovistic and Elohistic documents, with which these criticisms began, is fading away, so that he has often had to consider the question, "Is it probable that there should have been two narratives of the patriarchal and Mosaic ages, independent, yet largely resembling each other, and that these narratives should have been combined together into a single whole at a relatively early period of the history of Israel?" He answers, indeed, though with some hesitancy, that he believes it to be a fact that there were, "and that in some part, even if not so frequently as some critics have supposed, the independent sources used by the compiler are still *more or less* clearly discernible."

The period of this compilation he gives as "approximately, in the eighth century B.C.," or about Hezekiah's time! But that only carries us a few steps in the construction of the Pentateuch.

Deuteronomy comes next, which critics believe to be the "book of the law" found by Hilkiah in Josiah's day; but "how much earlier than B.C. 621 it may be is more difficult to determine. The supposition that Hilkiah himself was concerned in the composition of it is not probable; for a book compiled by the high-priest could hardly fail"—God, of course, being left out,—"*to emphasize the interests of the priestly body* at Jerusalem, which Deuteronomy does not do. . . . It is

probable its composition is not later than the reign of Manasseh."

The real "*priestly*" narrative—which does, of course, look sharply after their interests,—came later still. It is supposed to have added largely to Genesis, considerably to Exodus, including all about the special priesthood, the entire book of Leviticus, and much of Numbers. It belongs "approximately, to the time of the Babylonish captivity"! And now, with Ezra's revision, the Pentateuch is complete. But we must take notice, if we are to do justice to Dr. Driver's position, that he allows that there was a certain indefinable amount of tradition long before, and even, as we see, some written documents. The aggregate amount of these it is very hard to determine.

"Although, therefore, the Priests' Code assumed finally the shape in which we have it in the age subsequent to Ezekiel, it rests ultimately upon an ancient traditional basis, and many of the institutions prominent in it are recognized in various stages of their growth, by the earlier pre-exile literature, by Deuteronomy and by Ezekiel. The laws of P [the priestly code], even when they included later elements, were still referred to Moses,—no doubt because, in its basis and origin, Hebrew legislation was actually derived from him, and was only modified gradually."

This is how, it seems, the positive statements that "Moses spake" and "the Lord said to Moses" are to be interpreted. The issue is naturally such a romance as the following:—

"The institution which was among the last to reach a settled state, appears to have been the *priesthood*. Till the age of Deuteronomy"—which, we must remember, was that of *Manasseh*—"the right of exercising priestly offices must have been enjoyed by every member of the tribe of Levi; but this right on the part of the tribe generally is evidently not incompatible with the *pre-eminence* of a particular family (that of Aaron: *cf.* Deut. x. 6), which in the line of Zadok held the chief rank at the Central Sanctuary. After the abolition of the high places by Josiah, however, the central priesthood refused to acknowledge the right which (according to the law of Deuteronomy) the Levitical priests of the high places must have possessed. The action of the central priesthood was indorsed by Ezekiel (xliv. 6 *ff.*): the priesthood, he declared, was, for the future, to be confined to the descendants of Zadok; the priests of the high places (or their descendants) were condemned by him to discharge subordinate offices, as menials in attendance upon the worshipers. As it proved, however, the event did not altogether accord with Ezekiel's declaration; the descendants of Ithamar succeeded in maintaining their right to officiate as priests by the side of the sons of Zadok (1 Chron. xxiv. 4, etc.), but the action of the central priesthood under Josiah, and the sanction given to it by Ezekiel, combined, if not to create, yet to accentuate the distinction of 'priests' and 'Levites.' It is possible that those parts of P which emphasize this distinction (Num. i.–iv., etc.) are of later origin than the rest, and date from a time when—probably after a struggle with some of the disestablished Levitical priests—it was generally accepted." *

Think of a poor soul trying to read between the lines of his Bible after this fashion! or rather, of the revised one; for the present one,

*Driver, Introd. *pp.* 146, 147.

thank God, he cannot. Moses is thus "modified;" and God, who cannot be "modified," is left out,—except He is to be supposed to sanction this fraudulent speaking in His name! What is needed, to judge it all, is indeed rather conscience than learning, and here, it is comforting to think, the "babes" will not fare the worst.

Even the Pentateuch is not to be suffered to remain, and Moses being no longer credited with its authorship, the book of Joshua can be added to it, and the Pentateuch becomes a *Hexa*teuch. Here too they can find a Jehovist and an Elohist, a priestly writer and a Deuteronomist. But it is no great wonder if, according to the old belief, Joshua himself were the writer,—that one so long in companionship with Moses, and familiar with the books of the law, should use similar expressions, and write to some extent in the same style. That the writer was, in fact, a contemporary of the conquest is shown by his use of "we," and by his statement that Rahab was still dwelling in Israel (chap. v. 1, 6; vi. 25). Of course this can be as easily declared a fraud as the constant language of the Pentateuch itself. This can be denied also with equal ease,—and with this advantage, that we have the whole character of God against it.

But that the first five books are a real Pentateuch, we are able now to produce the structure of the Bible itself in proof. The five books of the Psalms are moulded on the Mosaic five, so that the Jews have named them "The Pentateuch of David." And that this is not a mere fancy of the Jews, but the real key to the spiritual meaning that pervades them, will be manifest the more the more deeply we look into them: we cannot, of course, enter here upon the proof.

Again: taking away from the Kethubim the historical and prophetical books, we have a didactic series of five, at the head of which the Psalms are found; Job, Solomon's Song, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, completing another Pentateuch.

The Prophets, taking the minor twelve as one book (as was done of old), and Lamentations as an appendix to Jeremiah, fall, then, into another series of five—another Pentateuch. Nay, the historical books, as we have seen, fall into still another pentateuchal series; while the books of the New Testament easily divide into a similar one of Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles, and Revelation. Thus the Pentateuch is the basis and model of the whole of Scripture.

Nor is this merely a form: on the contrary, the form but clothes and manifests the spirit that dwells in it. The spiritual meaning which the higher criticism ignores and would destroy, and which the apostle teaches us to find in the fullest way in the Old-Testament history,—which gives us the New Testament in the Old, prophecy in history, the divine seal everywhere upon its perfection,—confirms all this, and glorifies it. According to it, Joshua is not a continuation of the first series, but the beginning of a second. It is a true Genesis of the after-history,

and spiritually a new beginning, Deuteronomy having carried us beyond the wilderness, and, in principle, to the judgment-seat of Christ.

The numerical structure, of which this pentateuchal one is only a part, is indeed the key to the true higher criticism; only that one would not employ a term which implies the subjecting of the Word of God to the mere mind of fallen man. Faith's part it is to learn humbly from God, when once it realizes that it has to do with Him. While at the same time it purges the eye, not blinds it,—opens, not sets aside the understanding. Scripture itself, as the destructive criticism understands it, is not any more that which displays the Mind of all other mind, than is Nature under the withering blight of Darwinian evolution. "God in every thing" means wisdom in every thing. God thrust into the distance means the glorious Sun dwindled to a petty star. However much you may argue about its being in itself as bright as ever, it has no longer power to prevent the earth becoming a lifeless mass, whirled senselessly in a frozen orbit. The very law to which you may still vaunt its subjection is that which now surely condemns it to eternal darkness.

Against all this, the pentateuchal structure of the Bible utters emphatic protest. It is no mere arbitrary thing, then, but, like all that is divine, has a voice for us,—a voice which is of infinite sweetness and comfort also. For this number 5, which, as I have shown elsewhere,* is the *rest*-note of music, as well as the measure of its expansion, is that in which, as we have seen, man in his frailty is found in relation to the Almighty God. And while this implies responsibility on his part, and ways of divine government which may be to His creature

"Dark with excessive bright,"

and may give him exercise most needful, and fill him with apprehension too, yet it is that in which alone all blessing is, and to which Christ, in the wondrous mystery of His person, gives only adequate expression. Not only the divine seal is thus put upon all Scripture, but Christ is Himself that seal, from first to last the one Name that Scripture utters, —the assurance to us of an infinite joy with which we may face the history of the past, the mystery of the future. The book is in the hands of the Lamb slain; it is His; He is its interpreter and fulfillment both. With the chorus of the ages we say and sing, Worthy art Thou to take it!

## The Covenant-History.

The books of the Covenant-History are the second great division of the Old Testament. The covenant itself is of course the Law, but not as at first given—pure law, under which it was not possible for them, as it is not for any, to abide for a moment. Before they had received it as written by God upon the tables for them, it was deliberately broken; and those tables never came into the camp. But the purpose of the law

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World." p. 76.

could not be fulfilled in this brief trial of it. Man may readily own, "If Thou art *extreme* to mark what we have done amiss, O Lord, who may abide?" It is another thing to give up legal righteousness altogether,—to say with Job, when no outward evil has been proved, "I abhor *myself*," or with the prophet, "*All* our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." For this, there needs much searching out, and the second giving of the law was designed to do this. Dispensationally, it was designed to show that man was not only "ungodly," but "without strength." (Rom. v. 6.) The cross closed with the proof of a still more terrible indictment, that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7, *R.V.*)

As given the second time, the law in its proclamation of mercy and forgiveness allowed the trial to go on for many generations; and the divine long-suffering thus shown, with the interposition again and again of effectual help, only made it a more complete "ministration of death" and "of condemnation." (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.) By it, it was to be absolutely settled, that man could not, upon any conditional footing of his own works, stand before God. Thus the law itself decides that justification must be, if at all, "without the deeds of the law." (Rom. iii. 28.)

Here, then, we may see the first meaning of these historical books; we might entitle them "*The Covenant in Progress*," or equally, according to the numerical stamp, "*The Testimony of the Law.*" We have seen fully already, and especially from the last part of Deuteronomy, that the conclusion is a foregone one. None the less did it need to be worked out, since man would not credit God's testimony, but must prove for himself if God be true. And who can say that the lesson has respect to man alone, knowing as we do the unseen principalities and powers under whose eyes we live, and the interest that they have in these disclosures? In both ways, it was needful that questions such as these should find their answer, not privately only in the individual conscience, but written broadly on the face of the world in the public history of the nations of the earth.

For this to be fully done, Israel is put into the most favorable position possible for the trial. The conditions of the experiment are carefully attended to. Brought out from Egypt, from the hard bond-service there, they are made to recognize in their Deliverer the Almighty, the God of their fathers—the faithful, unchangeable Jehovah. They have not by searching out to find Him: He is demonstrated to their ears and eyes and hearts. The pillar of cloud and fire leads them. The sea divides to give them passage through. The manna sustains, the water from the rock revives them. The discipline of His hand makes them to realize no less His inflexible holiness. The law, on the one hand, showers upon them without stint the blessings of obedience; while it curses the disobedient with equal severity. Yet it is only deliberate and willful transgression that is so cursed: if God cannot clear the guilty, He can yet show Himself "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in

goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.)

And now they are afresh to know Him in this double character, as brought into a land "the glory of all lands," to replace a people cast out for their sins, and upon whom their own hands inflict the sentence of God for their destruction. Joshua shows us thus the final conditions of the experiment carried out. The new beginning is fairly accomplished. Every book that follows carries us on one step toward the foreshown result.

But the typical meaning carries this further, as it makes of Israel's history the shadow of the history of another people, chosen of God as Israel, but with a higher destiny,—heavenly, not earthly; but whose failure is therefore only so much the more signal, so much the more disastrous. The Church of God, upon another plane, shows that "history repeats itself," as has been truly said, because each generation of men is but what the generation before was: "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Yet, though true, that is no sufficient account of the parallel, extraordinary as it is, between Israel's history and our own. It is impossible to account for it, except as we see the hand of God over all, shaping events and inspiring their chroniclers, and realize to what an extent it is true that "all these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.) It may be difficult to follow this far into detail, yet what an interest must it give to these old records when we in any measure are enabled to see their prophetic character! Certainly we can neither have read history or Scripture with any right understanding except we have realized that the Church, no less than Israel, has had its Babylonish captivity and its partial return. This should prepare us to see more, and to seek with intelligence of what is before us.

Let us look briefly at the books individually now.

### *1. Joshua.*

Joshua shows us, first of all, the new beginning: *the power of God working for the people, on the whole obedient, to give them the land of promise; and the throne established in what is now the manifest kingdom of God upon earth.*

The sovereignty of God is strongly affirmed in the first chapter; the law being His expressed will, in subjection to which they find strength and victory. By His power, Jordan is cut off, and entrance into the land given them over its dried-up bed. By His power alone, the walls of Jericho fall down. The failure of the people causes hindrance till the cause is judged; then the enemy is overthrown, the law is formally proclaimed at Ebal, and the tide of conquest rolls through the land. The tribes are apportioned by lot, and the tent of meeting is established at Shiloh.

Typically, we have in Canaan the heavenly things which are ours, and the bringing in of a *heavenly* people into their inheritance. It is the beginning of the *kingdom of heaven* upon earth, not seen in its earth-history, but in the position and portion of its heirs, which Christ's power has made ours, and we are called by faith to enter into and enjoy.

### *2. Judges.*

Judges, in contrast with Joshua, begins the proper history of the people in disobedience, alliance made with the Canaanites, a breach with God. Hence soon division among the people and servitude to their enemies, with deliverances when they turn to God.

Typically, all this is easily read in its application to the heavenly people, who have here certainly repeated Israel's history.

The little book of Ruth, as supplementary to this, shows us the One to whom alone we can look to restore the inheritance, whether Jewish or Christian. For the Jew, how significant this famine in the land, the departure into Moab of the house of Elimelech ("My God is King"), "Naomi" changed to "Mara"—the return in sorrow, Ruth the Moabitess, the representative of Israel, now a stranger, and under the ban of law, yet united in grace to Boaz ("In Him is strength"), and thus securing the inheritance.

This, indeed, is a secret for faith; and for the Church too there must be the same grace, the same Kinsman-Redeemer, through whom the inheritance she has so failed to possess herself of shall be made good to her at last.

### *3. Kings.*

Kings, as we have said, includes Samuel as its first book; Samuel and Kings being always, as in the old Hebrew Bibles, but one book each. They give us, of course, the times of the kingdom,—that is, of God's kingdom in the hands of man; David and Solomon, a double picture of the true King. With this, the history of the sanctuary, Jehovah's dwelling-place in the midst, which is restored by David, built up into a temple by Solomon, lost utterly by Israel under Zedekiah. Samuel shows at the beginning, through the failure of the priesthood, one Ichabod period; Kings, at the end, through the failure of David's line, a worse Ichabod still.

Thus the *sanctuary*, as the dwelling-place of the supreme King, governs, as one may say, in these books; and in accordance with this, another quite characteristic feature is the appearance of the *prophet*. Samuel the prophet, as we know, anoints both Saul and David; and, whenever a king is anointed outside of the regular line, it is by a prophet. The prophet thus gives out the word of the Throne, and often in opposition to priest and king alike, the more distinctly, the more decline and apostasy prevail.

The King fully after God's own heart is One in whom are united all

the three. He is the Prophet, Priest, and King. David represents Him in this respect more fully than any other. He sets in order the priesthood, and in his linen ephod dances before the ark. "The Spirit of the Lord," he says, "spake through me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.) But it was not yet a threefold cord that cannot be broken; separately, all fail, with all that depends upon them: they are but shadows of what shall be, when "He shall come whose right it is."

Thus the books of the Kings show us a resurrection-period in Israel, a work of divine power which lifts them as a nation into wonderful prosperity and power. Yet it fails, because not yet has the breath of God come into it, as it will in the day of which Ezekiel prophesies. (Ezek. xxxvii.) Like one of those in old time, brought up from death, yet again to succumb to it, the nation passes from her brief period of glory into disruption and decay; and this is only a still stronger witness that the law is a ministration of death, and not of life.

*4. The Books of the Captivity.*

The Captivity-Books are three in number—Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. We have in them no more the history of a nation, but of a fragment of one; and the history itself is a fragment. The return from Babylon is scarcely even a revival: they rebuild in tears over what they are rebuilding. The new temple has no ark, no Urim, no glory, as once: it is an empty building, which is to receive no inhabitant as yet: a witness to them of the sentence of Lo-Ammi ("Not My people") under which still they are. Alas! they too, as the Lord told them, were but an empty house, though they would now sweep and garnish it with the new Pharisaism soon to arise, to resist the sentence of condemnation which God was writing upon them.

The three books have, of course, each a distinct meaning.

*Ezra* shows us the temple rebuilt, God acting still as Sovereign over the earth, but simply swaying the minds of the Gentile rulers under which they are, to show them favor. And to the remnant returned Ezra preaches repentance, as already repeating their fathers' sins in mingling with the idolatrous nations round about.

*Nehemiah* restores the city by building its wall and encouraging people to inhabit it. His work is that of demarkation, separation, and defense. But he is in continual conflict, and with those within as well as without.

This closes the sketch of the returned remnant: in *Esther*, we are among those not returned. The character of the book appears in the fact that it is the only book in Scripture (except the allegory of Solomon's Song) in which the name of God is not found. Yet His providential care of the people with whom He cannot openly associate Himself is very plain. As to its numerical place, I believe this is given by the clear manifestation of their condition in this very way. In its typical or allegorical aspect, on the other hand, it looks on to the future, and

prophesies the resurrection of the people: the Jewish bride displaces the Gentile, and the Jewish Mordecai, like another Joseph, is exalted to the power of the throne; the enemies of Israel are defeated and overthrown.

This will suffice for the present as to the Captivity-Books; but one other historical book remains:—

*5. Chronicles.*

This, which is, like Samuel and Kings, but one book properly, is plainly the Deuteronomy of this division. As Deuteronomy rehearses Israel's ways with God in the wilderness, and correspondingly God's ways with them, so Chronicles rehearses, in a disguised manner, (in the genealogies,) history from the beginning, and openly the chief part of that of the books of the Kings. The purpose of enforcing obedience as the way of blessing is most evident. Keil says,—

"Now from these and other descriptions of the part the Levites played in events, and the share they took in assisting the efforts of pious kings to revivify and maintain the temple worship, the conclusion has been rightly drawn that the chronicler describes with special interest the fostering of the Levite worship according to the precepts of the law of Moses, and holds it up to his contemporaries for earnest imitation; yet . . . the chronicler does not desire to bring honor to the Levite and to the temple worship: his object is rather to draw from the history of the kingship in Israel a proof that faithful adherence to the covenant which the Lord had made with Israel brings happiness and blessing; the forsaking of it, on the contrary, brings ruin and a curse."

The special insistence on the sanctuary worship in Chronicles is not strange in connection with that view of Kings which has been taken, that the history of the Kings was in fact that of the sanctuary, a view which in its obvious relation to it the book of Chronicles so entirely confirms. And this notice may for the present suffice, until we have before us the books themselves.

## The Dispensational Purpose of Israel's Separation from the Nations.

Much has been written upon the dispensational purpose of Israel's call and separation from the Gentile world. If our inquiry is to be answered from the Word of God, that answer may in part be readily found. A full reply it would of course be useless to pretend to give, when it is still true that, as to *any thing*, "we know in part." And especially in His governmental dealings with the nations is it true that "clouds and darkness are round about Him," while we must remember what the psalmist connects immediately with this, that "righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." (Ps. xcvii. 2, *R.V.*)

But in order to a right inquiry, we must have rightly stated the facts about which we inquire, and the survey must be sufficiently wide also to put them in their proper setting.

If in the historical books before us we are to contemplate Israel as the chosen people of the Lord, shut off by peculiar institutions from the

nations round about, we must remember that when in the year 1451 B.C. they crossed the dry bed of Jordan, the world was already, according to the common chronology, over twenty-five centuries old. The book of Genesis, which gives the birth of the nation, speaks briefly of these preceding ages, but with sufficient clearness to let us know that God, as the Creator-Father of all men, had not hidden Himself from His creatures, but that (as the apostle says of the Gentiles,) they, "when they knew God, glorified Him not as God;" "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge:" "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Thus came heathenism, and the dark forms of idolatry,—not as men so often blasphemously feign, out of honest efforts to find God, when He had left them without witness, but from their having "*changed* the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." (Rom. i. 21, 23, 28.)

From these corrupting influences God separated a people to Himself, but in doing this made Himself known decisively in a public testimony that should reach far and wide. Egypt was at once the chief centre of civilization, and the country fullest of bestial gods; and there God manifested Himself in judgments that humbled at the same time their monarch and multitudinous deities. "In very deed have I raised thee up for this," He says to Pharaoh, "that I might show by thee My power, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." "And upon all the gods of the Egyptians I will execute judgment," He says elsewhere to Moses. When the crowning blow fell at the Red Sea, the song of triumph speaks of its wide effect upon the countries toward which their faces were now set. The forty years' wanderings in the wilderness abounded in signs and wonders by which not Israel alone, but the nations also, were made to realize the presence of God. Then came the conquest of Gilead and Bashan, the prophecy of Balaam, the destruction of the Midianites; and after this long threatening of judgment, its execution upon the nations of Canaan, whose iniquity was now full, and the abominations of their worship a chief part of their iniquity.

Thus, when God took Israel to Himself, He proclaimed to the world His power and greatness, in contrast with the nothingness of all false gods. The land in which He placed them lay in the midst of the civilized world. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, lay north and east; Egypt, south-west; Sidon and Tyre, upon the coast-line of Palestine, were the traders with Greece and the whole Mediterranean coast. Placed in such a land, God's sanctuary, if men sought it, was in no obscure hiding-place, but on the intersection of well-known routes of travel, uniting the countries of the ancient world.

The sanctuary-door stood open. The presence of the stranger in the land was anticipated and provided for, as we have seen; and he, if he were needy, found his need cared for in Jehovah's land. If he and his

were circumcised, he could sit down with them at their most sacred feasts. Rahab, the Canaanitess, with all her family, part of the nations under ban from God, could yet by faith take her place among the elect nation, and have her name (with Ruth afterward) in the genealogy of David. The barrier, it is plain, did not exist to keep out those who sought the God of the whole earth, and of "the spirits of all flesh" upon the earth.

It is plain we must not judge of Israel's position toward the Gentiles by the narrowness of an after-day. If God had necessarily withdrawn from the abominations of heathendom, His sanctuary was still as a city of refuge with the ways kept clear and blazoned with welcome for those who fled to it. There was isolation, but not exclusion. While the marvels of His people's history were at once a challenge of the prevalent falsehoods round and a gospel for the man who sought the truth. That truth could not associate itself with falsehood was the true and profitable lesson of Israel's separation.

If now, instead of its aspect toward the generations of the Old-Testament times, we inquire as to the true *dispensational* meaning of Israel's call and isolation, we shall find it in that experiment of law which we have again and again seen that God was making in their case. The apostle shows us the end of it when he says (Rom. v. 6) that, "when we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*." The legal covenant, in the long trial under it, in the utter failure all through, permitted to come fully out at last, showed fully that this was man's condition; and this was the main purpose of it, as handmaid to the gospel, that the law should break down all pretension to human righteousness, and thus declare man's need of atonement, and of justification by Another's work.

To make this clearer still, we have only to put the dispensation of law in its connection with the dispensations that preceded it. For the law was not the first of dispensations among fallen men; and it is important to see this, and the meaning of it. The law was, as a dispensation, neither primal nor universal. That it was simply with Israel is declared fully in connection with the words of the tables, the ten commandments (Ex. xxxiv. 27, 28): "Write thou these words," says Jehovah to Moses; "for after the purport of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel; . . . and he wrote upon the table the *words of the covenant, the ten words*." The first commandment accordingly declares, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The fifth commandment in the same, speaking directly to Israel, bids, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee." Such words imply the covenant to be exclusively with Israel.

If the end of the law is admitted, this will be seen as in full consist-

ency with it. "Whatsoever the law saith," writes the apostle, "it saith unto them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) This does not mean, as it might at first seem, that all the world was under the law. He had stated the opposite. The heathen Gentile he had characterized as "without law" (chap. ii. 12, 14)—"a law" merely "to themselves," which is the *opposite* of being under it from God. Their sins were open and undeniable. He turns then to the Jew (ii. 17): "But if," he says, "thou bearest the name of a Jew, and restest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law." (*R. V.*) He goes on to convict him by his own conscience: why, the very Gentiles blasphemed the name of his God on account of the wickedness of the Jew. He then appeals to the verdict of the law. What had been said with regard to those under it? Then come the quotations—"There is none righteous,—no, not one," and so on. "Now," is his comment upon it, "we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith unto them that are under the law, that *every* mouth may be stopped." The Gentile's mouth is stopped already: "You," he says, "you, who are no heathen,—you, the professing people of God,—yours is now stopped also: *every* mouth is stopped; the whole world is guilty."

Apart from this, if indeed "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man," then it is evident that an experiment with one nation is as good as with the whole race, and proves the same as to the whole race. Nay, a small experiment, if sufficient, is better than a large one. It is *more manageable:* its issue can be brought more completely under the eye, and so be more completely demonstrated. We have seen how in the land of Israel God chose a theatre before the eyes of all, and thus the world would be more completely convicted, strange to say, by the trial of Israel, *than it would if the whole world were tried!*

This trial was of God assuredly. The creature needed the lesson, and it was given. For generation after generation the gospel waited: the "due time" for the sacrifice which it proclaimed had not yet come. Till then, the typical sacrifices had their place, and faith, though it saw dimly in the shadow, yet saw and rejoiced. Sacrifice, though incorporated into the legal system, was not of it, but older, dating, as we know, even from the gate of paradise. Abel's offering, Cain's rejection of it, divided men from the beginning into two classes, ever to be known by that test. But the world was Cain's, and not Abel's, and man's need had to be demonstrated to him; spite of conscience, under terror of an unknown God, forcing men into the devil's dark and abominable perversions of the precious symbols of the Christ that was to come. Human religion is always law in some shape; God's grace he has to be humbled to receive. Man's thought is founded upon the dream of his own competency. He can do something that will be accepted if he cannot pay

the full price. Hence God must enforce His claim, and the law become man's schoolmaster, grace only a whisper for the ear trained to receive it, though the father of circumcision manifestly finds righteousness by faith, and circumcision itself is the "seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." (Rom. iv. 11.)

All, then, is in fullest harmony as to the meaning of the dispensation of law, while all through God was the God of grace, and the heart that sought God found Him.

Moreover, if the Gentile were given up in the meantime, even here there was to be given a needed lesson, as the apostle shows us. It was "when in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21.) It was in the wisdom of God, then, that the world should prove the value of that which it had acquired so painfully, and by disobedience to Him. Man had sought wisdom in self-exaltation that he might be as God; and the philosopher still deems that he can find Him with his mind, instead of with his conscience. The world is full of the weird and fantastic shapes that he has thus conjured up; but he has no *gospel* until it is revealed to him,—knows neither God nor himself. The Greek was the typical Gentile, and was known as the seeker after wisdom. At Athens it was that Paul declared the "unknown God."

If Jew was separated from Gentile, the Gentile too was separated from the Jew, for a need which in either case was a common human need. For the one and the other, the lesson to be learnt was, the worthlessness of what he trusted in. He that thinketh himself wise in this world must be stripped of his wisdom, and become a fool, that he may be wise. He that in ignorance of the righteous character of God would come to Him in the filthy rags of his own righteousness must, with Joshua the high-priest in the prophet's vision, have the filthy garments taken from him, that the robe from the Father's house may cover his nakedness. In either case, man must be humbled to be exalted; he must be made poor that he may receive "durable riches." He must come an empty-handed sinner to receive Christ. And this is still the education that the world most truly needs.

Even in Israel's shameful fall, then, from her place as the people of God on earth, God was still sovereign, and His purpose did not fail. In weakness and apparent defeat He is still Lord of all, and amid these almighty strength works on to its foreseen end. The cross is once for all the type of these ways of God.

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# SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF JOSHUA.

LITERALLY.—The new beginning: the power of God working for the people, on the whole obedient, to give them the land of promise; and the Throne established in what is now the manifest kingdom of God on earth.

TYPICALLY.—The bringing in of a *heavenly* people into their inheritance. The beginning of the kingdom of heaven upon the earth; not seen, however, in its earth-history, but in the position and portion of its heirs, which Christ's power has made our own, and we are called to enter into and enjoy.

As already said, if Canaan typify, as all Christians agree, our heavenly inheritance, it should be yet clear that Israel's taking possession here is not the figure of our entering it one by one at death, nor even of our glorious entrance together when Christ comes. If it were so, certainly the details would be to us past comprehension, and so without meaning; and the warfare upon entrance (though Rev. xii. 7 should be taken to explain it, as has been done,) would still be inexplicable from the first. On the other hand, the epistle to the Ephesians, as many now accept, in its doctrine of our warfare with principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12) manifestly alludes to Israel's "flesh and blood" warfare here, and suggests the true explanation. We are called *now* to enter in by faith into our heavenly portion, and it is here that Satan seeks to hinder and baffle us, knowing well that it is only as we lay hold of what is ours in heaven that we can be truly pilgrims and strangers upon earth; this we have had, from the earth-side of it, in Abraham's life: we are now to see it from the heaven-side.

Joshua has but two main divisions, which exactly divide the book:—

1. (Chap. i.–xii.)—The Entrance into the Land.
2. (Chap. xiii.–xxiv.)—Its Division among the Tribes.

## NOTES.

THE subject of the book must now be more fully considered, and in order to this it will be necessary to repeat some things that have been already before us, but in a disconnected manner. And first of all as to—

ISRAEL'S POSSESSION OF THE LAND

at the time the book of Joshua speaks of. As we have fully seen, the covenant according to which they now enter it, and according to which alone they have held it yet, was that legal covenant under which it was impossible that they, or any people that ever lived, could retain possession of it. Let law be ever so modified, it is still law; and as such it "worketh wrath," as the apostle declares. Most useful and necessary for its purpose, that purpose was not to enable man to stand in the righteousness of a fulfiller of it, but to give "the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.) As a consequence, the blessing promised them in Abraham could not be in this way theirs, nor this covenant of law be added to the covenant of promise. The careful statement of this is in the epistle to the Galatians: "Brethren," says the apostle, "I speak after the manner of men: though it were a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth *or addeth thereto.* Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, a covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise; but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise." (Gal. iii. 15–18., *R. V.*)

In his application of this, Paul dwells upon the *Gentiles'* part in the blessing of Abraham; but it is of course as decisive with regard to the Jews. The covenant of law could not, as being of an entirely contradictory character, be added to that covenant with Abraham, which was pure, free promise. And the four hundred and thirty years between the two show their absolute distinctness. Israel, therefore, when they passed under Joshua into the land, were not receiving it according to the original promise, which remains yet to be fulfilled to them in all its length and breadth. And so already Moses has shown us. (Deut. xxx. 1–3, etc.)

Accordingly, the small dimensions of the land that they received are in complete contrast with the "goodly land and *large,*" which they are yet to enjoy, whose limits are only the Euphrates, the Red Sea, and the Nile. (Gen. xv. 18; Ex. xxiii. 31; Josh. i. 4.) The lands south and east, from which they were expressly excluded in Joshua's time, as Edom, Moab, and Ammon, are as expressly stated to belong to them at a future day. (Is. xi. 14; Amos ix. 12; Jer. xlix. 2.) Moreover, as now set conditionally in the land, their limits were not to remain in their present narrowness, but to be extended little by little, if only they remained faithful to their God, as in fact they did not remain. They shrank, thus, even within their present limits, neither the land of the Philistines, nor Sidon, nor Lebanon, being possessed by them.

Typically, God has overruled all this for our admonition. For God has opened to us also the land of our inheritance, and bidden us by faith enjoy our portion; the Spirit of God being come to take of the things of Christ and show them to us, and to make known to us the things that are freely given to us of God. But how little have we laid hold of! Thank God that our final possession is not to be according to the narrow limits of *present* possession! Israel is surely here our encouragement, and also our admonition.

THE CONFLICT

of which Ephesians speaks is as little apprehended by Christians in general as the book of Joshua in its typical meaning is, and for the same reason. Conflict with the *flesh* is considered to be, by so many, true Christian conflict, yet it is plain it is a conflict Christ could know nothing of, for there was in Him *no* sinful flesh. In us it is true that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to another." (Gal. v. 17.) But the remedy is not in conflict, but in that which, in proportion as it is carried out in faith, will make conflict impossible: for we are to "reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. vi. 11.) Conflict of this kind

we all, indeed, too much know, and we have had already the vivid type of it in Israel's with Amalek. (Ex. xvii.) True Christian conflict, however, is that which is presented here, with its dangers and its victories also: and we have need, as the apostle tells us, of the "whole armor of God; that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

Even as against Amalek in the wilderness, we have seen Joshua as the leader. He who gives us possession of the heavenly things is He who gives power in the conflict with the lusts of the flesh. And Satan well knows that if he can deprive us of our joy in what is ours in heaven, our lives cannot be a fitting witness for the Lord on earth. What, then, must be the condition of those who know not even the *meaning* of the conflict? For without the struggle, Canaan cannot be ours.

These Canaanite inhabitants of the land, then, answer to the "principalities and powers in heavenly places" of which the apostle speaks; but his words throw more light than this upon what is in the book before us, and clear up what would be a difficulty in understanding it. They are, he says, "the rulers of the darkness of this world," or, as the Revisers read it with the best authorities, "the world-rulers of this darkness." God is light, and darkness is His opposite. In this Satan works, the evil of a world which is under his sway, and by which he resists the work of God. Our armor, the panoply of God, is thus the "*armor of light.*" We shall find, as we study the types of Joshua, that from Jericho and onward it is the power of the world that is set before us; and what more effectively blinds the children of God to heavenly things than the dust of the world?

The land into which Israel is passing over is distinctly the land of Canaan, and the general name for the people of the land is Canaanite, as Canaan was their common father. The word is derived from one which means, "to stoop," as most say, or, as Parkhurst, "to lay down," as a merchantman would do in exposing his goods. That Scripture attaches to it the meaning of "merchant" seems clear. Of Ephraim Hosea says (xii. 7), "He is a merchant (Canaan); balances of deceit are in his hand." And Ezekiel (xvii. 4), "He carried it into a land of traffic (Canaan); and he set it in a city of merchants." This is said generally to be a later meaning arising from the common occupation of the Canaanite nations, which is not at all proved to be the fact; while, in any case, the admitted identification of meaning in the prophets suggests, necessarily, spiritual interpretation all the way through. Here it is in perfect accord with the New-Testament application: we are to "take the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the *wiles* of the devil." The devil's power is that of craft and deceit: he is the "father of lies;" and his lies are peculiarly those of a trader, who offers his worthless goods at a ruinous price. You shall have the world in whatever of it suits you best, as he offered to the Lord Himself all the glory of it,—a bait with a golden hook.

There is one thing more to be remembered in order to read clearly the type here, that, while the conflict is with spiritual powers, these are in strictness only the leaders in it,—the "principalities,"—while under their rule are found the men of the world as instruments through whom they work—human souls, who may, as Rahab, be delivered from their hand. While also the rulers themselves may be, and will be, often identified with, or represented by, the principles through which they gain and exercise dominion over their unhappy followers. Satan seldom openly appears as Satan; but lust, pride, ambition, maintain faithfully his kingdom, and sway the minds and hearts of men.

## Div. 1.

The first twelve chapters of the book give us, evidently, the entrance into the land, as the second half has for its general subject, its apportionment among the tribes. The entrance has to be in power, in the first place, where no enemies can oppose. Conflict there is not until they are across the river, and in the

# JOSHUA.

## DIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–xii.)

*The Entrance into the Land.*

(I.)

Command and promise.

1. AND it came to pass, after the [a]death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto [b]Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' attendant, saying, Moses my servant is dead; and now arise, go over this Jordan,—thou and all this people, unto the [c]land which I give unto them,—to the children of Israel. [d]Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

[a] Deut. 34. 5. *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.
[b] Ex. 24. 13. Ex. 32. 17. *cf.* Eph. 1. 20, 21.
[c] *cf.* Eph. 1. 3.
[d] Deut. 11. 24, 25. *cf.* Eph. 1. 18.

camp at Gilgal. And after this, they themselves begin it. So with us, Christ's work it is that carries us through death, and gives us our place in heaven. Then if the land is to be practically ours, we must *conquer it.*

There are seven subdivisions, ending with rest attained: "the land had rest from war." (Chap. xi. 23.)

1. The first chapter is plainly introductory, and gives the principles which govern the advance of the people into the land.

Moses was now no longer in the midst of Israel, and the leader of the people is his minister Joshua. The spiritual significance of this has been already before us, and needs only to be briefly repeated. It is this spiritual significance found in the typical meaning which alone invests the whole history here with its true interest for the child of God. We are in the midst of things which "*happened unto them for* types" (1 Cor. x. 11, *marg.*): words which justify the fullest importance that can be given to them in this character, and magnify them in every detail given, amazingly beyond mere historical proportions.

Moses and Joshua, as we have elsewhere seen, both speak of Christ: Moses, of Christ down here in the world, living among men; Joshua, of Christ (in spirit, not in person,) acting by the Holy Ghost in His people. Thus Joshua it is who leads into the land; and while Moses is the "servant of the Lord," the picture of Jehovah's perfect Servant as given in the prophet (Is. lii. 13), Joshua is "Moses' minister," waiting upon and representing this personal Christ.

The divine call now summons the people of God to take possession of their inheritance, Moses' (Christ's) death being necessary to have taken place before the land can be opened and entered. To take possession there must be the energy of faith: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread on shall be your own." Then come the definite limits in the meantime, which (though not the full final limits,) have been so narrowed in the thoughts of those who have taken what the people actually possessed as all that God promised them. In fact we are only beginning to realize that the "land of the Hittites" itself, which was yet less, not more, than the land of Canaan, went up far beyond Lebanon to the Euphrates itself; "all" of which to the sea-coast of the Mediterranean belongs to Israel by promise, and waits only faith on their part, to be made good to them. Keil even—an orthodox commentator, in one of the best of critical commentaries,—speaks of the "oratorical" character of the promise here! May we, then, without sin, ascribe exaggeration to God? What if the promise of a heavenly inheritance for us be equally "oratorical"? And though Israel has failed to lay hold of what is truly theirs, is it not simply what man has always done?

From the [e]wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your boundary. There shall not any man be able to [f]stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be [g]strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land that I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong, and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: [h]turn not away from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest do wisely whither-

e Gen.15.18. Ps. 72. 8, 9.

f Deut.23.7. *cf.* Jas. 4.7.

g Eph. 6. 10. Deut. 31. 7. 1Kings 2.2. 2 Tim. 2. 1.

h Deut.5.32.

In fact they are, even in their unbelief, only the more fully our types. *Had* they taken possession of all that is here promised them as theirs, it would take much from the exactness of the picture which we may find of ourselves in them. How little have we indeed "apprehended that for which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 12)! And if our final possession of what is ours in Christ were to be limited, as we have limited Israel's, by what we have, any of us, laid hold of in faith now, how little would be our portion! Thank God, His thoughts for us are far above our thoughts!

But we cannot pretend as yet spiritually to show these boundary-lines. As we go on we may trust that what our inheritance is will little by little dawn on us. This is the way ordinarily in which God teaches us, and we must go humbly, if we go in faith.

Enemies there are in this path, and we need therefore the encouraging exhortation which follows. "No enemy shall be able to stand before thee," God says to Joshua. And when we remember who our Leader is, it is simple that it must be so. Christ is the "Captain of our salvation," and in proportion as we identify ourselves with Him, we shall find strength given us which will not be wanting for any need; it will be not our own, but His who says, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee;" words which the apostle teaches us so to apply to ourselves as boldly to say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. xiii. 6.) This strength of an arm which is not our own arm is the sweetest kind of strength that creature can know. It is companionship, communion, perfect security,—all holiness in it, all wisdom. God with us means all that God is.

Well He may say, therefore, "Be strong and of a good courage." And again, "Only be thou strong and very courageous." Just because the strength needed is not our own, we may be strong, and in this, honor Him who has identified His glory with our blessing. Courage is the virtue by which we walk according to His Word; as it is added here, "that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law that Moses My servant commanded thee;" and this is the condition of success,—"turn not thou from it to the right hand, nor to the left, that thou mayest do wisely whithersoever thou goest." And this is repeated with emphasis in the next verse. How needful for us this absolute insistance on the Word of God, so prone as we are to let expediency govern in divine things, to judge by results instead of by principles, and to count preciseness but Pharisaism. Indeed, in days such as ours, when the Word of God is spread abroad, and in a certain way there is much inquiry into it, how few are they who honestly, according to their light, carry out *all* that they know is enjoined! how few who have no questions in reserve which they dare not fully face! how many who do not wish to be disturbed by inquiries of which they cannot tell where they may end! Let us all—readers and writer—make it a personal question for ourselves, neither as ready to judge others, nor excusing ourselves by others, and a question entertained before Him who can answer it,—"Lord, is it I?"

soever thou goest. This [i]book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; and thou shalt [j]meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way [k]prosperous, and then shalt thou do wisely. Have not I commanded thee? be strong, and of good courage; quake not, nor be dismayed; for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the midst of the camp, and command the people, saying, [l]Prepare yourselves provisions, for in three days ye shall be passing over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth you to possess it. And to the [m]Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Remember the word that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, saying, Jehovah your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall abide in the land that Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but all your mighty men of valor shall pass over in array before your brethren, and help them, until Jehovah have given your brethren rest as he hath you, and they also possess the land that Jehovah your God giveth them; then shall ye return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses Jehovah's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrise.

*i* Ps. 119. 9. *cf.* Col.3.16.

*j* Ps. 1. 2.

*k* 1Tim.4.15.

*l cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14.

*m* Num. 32.

And what a grand word is this to give strength,—"Have not *I* commanded thee?" How good to bow ourselves to this yoke, and to remember that where God has spoken we must be either servants or rebels; let the matter of the command be what it may. And then again the exhortation,—not a word, be sure, more than is needed, "Be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, nor be thou dismayed; for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

We have next the words of the leader himself, addressed to the people, and the first word is, to prepare food for themselves, for within three days they are to cross the river. One might think such an injunction scarcely needed, but the people of God undergo but too many willing fasts from spiritual food, whereby they are never strengthened, but weakened. The "three days" here make a difficulty for those whose critical wisdom these difficulties are to accredit. They wait for the spies who are detained three days across the river, and then take three days more mustering, as it would seem, before they pass over. In an ordinary history it would not have been necessary to invent three writers on this account, to make a patchwork of various accounts very indifferently put together. It would have been said simply that Joshua had not anticipated the delay which in fact took place. Why not say so? Is it necessary to accredit Joshua with infallibility, in order to *dis*credit Scripture with a mistake? Let the mistake be with Joshua, and it may still be no mistake with Scripture, possibly even some spiritual thought attaching to these "three days" three times repeated. Gleams of resurrection break out through all these scenes, for it is by resurrection-power alone that we can cross the river of death into our inheritance.

A special injunction is needed by the two and a half tribes, because of the divergence of their interests from that of the whole nation, from which they have in measure separated themselves. They are now to have the fighting with-

And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only Jehovah thy God be with thee as he was with Moses. Every man that is rebellious against thy voice, and hearkeneth not unto thy words in all that thou commandest him shall be put to death: only be strong, and of good courage.

(II.)

The spies' testimony: the word of judgment and of salvation.

2. And Joshua the son of Nun sent out from Shittim two men as [a]spies secretly, saying, Go, view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into a harlot's house, whose name was Rahab, and lay there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came in hither

[a] Num. 13. 2.

out the personal reward; just as from the conflict with the power of Satan no Christian can be excused; and yet for many it may not have its true significance.

Nevertheless, even from these, in the flood-tide of present enthusiasm, there comes back an encouraging response. And that it is not mere excitement Joshua would surely realize, as their answer re-echoes the Lord's words. "We will hearken to thee as unto Moses," is their reply: "Jehovah be with thee, as He was with Moses; . . . only be strong and of a good courage."

2. We have now in Rahab's story, very plainly, the testimony of salvation, and the answer of faith. Joshua sends spies across Jordan to "view the land, even Jericho." Jericho, at the entrance of the land, presents the opposition of the enemy in those cities walled up to heaven which Israel before had spoken of so despairingly. But the power of the enemy, as we have seen, acts through the world, which, as darkness, opposes the light, in which is the inheritance of the saints. (Col. i. 12.) Jericho, at the entrance of Canaan, and significantly close by Jordan, the river of death, is the world, upon which faith must, as it were, execute the judgment of God before we can possess ourselves of our heavenly portion.

The story of Rahab, with its New-Testament comments, is so plain in its meaning that this is recognized by all who see any spiritual meaning in these histories at all. "Rahab" means "enlargement." As the psalmist says, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room," so could this Canaanitish woman say. Not in figure merely, but in fact, she is a sinner saved from impending judgment. One of those nations upon whom, as having filled up the measure of their iniquities, the curse was already pronounced; among these a harlot, sinner among sinners; she is a witness that from whatever "end of the earth" a soul looks to God, there is salvation for it. And how beautiful to see that in such a case as this it is, where the lesson is one so needful beyond all others, the vail, elsewhere maintained, drops almost altogether, and fact and type come together as one!

But why does the story of Rahab occur just here?

In relation to the literal history it showed that even the doomed Canaanites, according to a principle openly announced by the prophet afterward (Jer. xviii. 7, 8), might have escaped their doom, by such a repentance and turning to God as was found in Rahab. It was a gospel of *fact* for all and every nation, before a gospel of words there could be.

In relation to the typical meaning, it shows that if, on the one hand, Christianity proclaims, as it does, the judgment of the world, it has, on the other hand, its assurance of goodwill and blessing for all who out of this world turn to God.

It may seem, in some sense, a turning aside from the line of things before us here; but God is always ready to turn aside for such a purpose; or rather would show us that such a thing as this is never foreign to His purpose, as it is never absent from His heart.

to-night men of the children of Israel to search out the land. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come unto thee, that are entered into thy house; for they are come to search out all the land. Now the woman had taken the two men, and [o]hidden them; and she said, True: the men did come unto me, but I knew not whence they were; and it came to pass, when the gate was to be shut at dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I know not; [p]pursue them quickly, that ye may overtake them. But she had taken them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had arranged upon the roof. And the men pursued after them, the Jordan way, unto the fords; and when they who were pursuing after them had gone out, they shut the gate.

And before they were lain down, she went up to them upon the roof, and said unto the men, I [q]know that Jehovah hath given you the land, and that the [r]dread of you is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how Jehovah [s]dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when ye came out of Egypt; also what ye did to the two [t]kings of the Amorites, which were on the other side of Jordan,—to Sihon and Og, whom ye destroyed

o Ex. 1. 19. Jas. 2. 25. Heb. 11. 31.

p 2 Sam. 17. 19.

q *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 29, 30.

r Gen. 35. 5. Ex. 15. 14, 16.

s Ex. 14. 21, 22. Ps. 18. 15-19.

t Num. 21. 21-35. Ps. 136. 13-22.

"Jericho" means "fragrance;" and such is the world to the men of it, though it lies, as they own, too near the river of death. Indeed, though the earth be full of the Lord's mercies, and there is abundant testimony in it to the Creator-God, yet death is never out of view, and judgment lies the other side of death, as Israel's camp lay beyond Jordan. God is for its inhabitants in the enemy's camp, and how are they to distinguish Him from the enemy? nay, is He not the One upon whom all the power of the enemy depends? Yes, that is plain; and the hearts of the men of Jericho sink as they realize it. Alas, faint hearts may yet make stubborn resistance, and the power of sin and Satan is nowhere more fully seen than here. Where God is seen but as an enemy, and His judgment against sin treated but as an enemy's act, the soul hardens itself against Him, and would rid itself of the presence of those who are His people, and identified with the hated truth. The king of Jericho sends to apprehend those whom faith in Rahab welcomes as the means of deliverance. Yet they stand in the same relationship to her as to them; but faith argues, must there not be good in God? and there is the germ of repentance also, for if there be good in God realized, we must be with Him against ourselves.

Rahab hides the spies therefore, identifying herself at her own personal risk with those who are the people of God. Her works justify her as a believer, show by their character that she has faith, which is what James speaks of; not justify her as righteousness *before God*, which is what Paul denies absolutely as to Abraham. (Rom. iv. 2.) The harlot Rahab has no righteousness to trust in, no moral character to commend her to God. But she has the faith of a poor sinner that clings to Him; and that faith, as all true faith will, manifests itself as living and real, spite of her lying to the king of Jericho's messengers, in which we see at once her faith and the weakness of it.

Rahab's confession of God, and where He is, is full and clear: "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath." And then she puts in her prayer for mercy, in which she includes all her father's house. And good it is to see how promptly and confidently the men of Israel are able to pledge themselves to the fullest extent that faith can ask. Theirs is no may-be gospel,

under ban. We heard, and our hearts [u]melted, and there remained no spirit any more in any man because of you; for Jehovah your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath. And now, I pray you, swear to me by Jehovah, since I have dealt kindly with you, that ye also will deal kindly with my [v]father's house, and give me a true [w]token; and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. And the men said unto her, [x]Our lives for yours, if ye utter not this our business: and it shall be, when Jehovah giveth us the land, that we will deal [y]kindly and truly with thee. Then she let them down by a [z]cord through the window; for her house was on the city-wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers light upon you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned; and afterward ye can go your way.

And the men said unto her, We will be blameless as to this oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we are come into the land, thou shalt bind in the window this line of [a]scarlet thread by which thou hast let us down. And thou shalt gather unto thee in the house thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's house; and it shall be, that whosoever shall [b]go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we shall be blameless; and every one that shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be upon our head if hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us swear. And she said, According to your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed; and she [c]bound the scarlet line in the window.

u ch. 5. 1.
v Gen. 19. 12.
w Ex. 12. 13.
x *cf.* Heb. 6. 13–20.
y Gen. 24. 49.
z 1 Sam. 19. 12. Acts 9. 25.
a *cf.* Heb. 9. 12–14.
b *cf.* Ex. 12. 22. Col. 1. 23. Heb. 3. 6.
c ver. 13, 18.

but positive enough to give confidence to a soul in need. And such is the gospel of God to-day: it is a gospel the reception of which gives peace to the soul. It is not yea and nay, but yea. For if "blessed are all they that put their trust in Him," self need not occupy or terrify me: the object of faith it cannot be. I am free to rest all upon a Saviour, and then not confidence is presumption, but the *lack* of confidence.

But Rahab wants a "token," and the spies are able to give her that. The line of scarlet thread by which she lets them down out of the window is bound in the window as a sign, not to herself of course, but to the messengers of judgment when they come, that judgment is not to fall upon any in that sheltered house. What has been the means of their own deliverance they give to her as hers; and the likeness to the blood-sheltered houses in the night of the passover is at once evident. The "scarlet" was in fact the blood of an insect (vol. i. p. 487, *n.*)-the "worm" of Ps. xxii., and in this way how plain the reference to the Lord! There is but one thing that can secure the sinner in the day of judgment, and of that God gives us many assurances.

Still Rahab has another witness for her, and without this the scarlet line would be of no avail,—a living witness—two being, as we know, sufficient testimony—

And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned; and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, and found them not. And the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. And they said unto Joshua, Truly Jehovah hath delivered all the land into our hands; and all the inhabitants of the land even [d] faint because of us.

Through the river of death, to resurrection ground.

[d] ver. 9.

(III–V.)

1. (III.) The ark of the Lord in its peerless supremacy.

3. [1]And Joshua arose [e] early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan,—he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass at the end of [f] three

[e] Gen. 22. 3. ch. 6. 12. ch. 7. 16. ch. 8. 10.

[f] ch. 1. 11.

in the camp of Israel. And this has its meaning for us: Christ risen from the dead is the living Witness for us before God. What would His death for us have been but the direst calamity, apart from resurrection? And thus if the apostle speaks of our "being justified by His blood" (Rom. v. 9), he no less speaks of Him as being "raised from the dead for our justification" (iv. 25). If His death be, as it were, *Christ* for us, His resurrection is *God* for us; and thus we "believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (24), for this is what characterizes Him toward us as a Saviour-God. That the men tarry three days before they cross the river may be a further hint of this very thing.

3. We now come to another most impressive type of resurrection, most evident surely as this, the passage of the people through Jordan into the land. Our thoughts are necessarily carried back to the similar passage through the Red Sea which lay at the beginning of their wilderness-journey as this at the end of it, and of which it is thus, as it were, the completion. And so the history itself presents it, for when they have come to Gilgal Jehovah says to them, "This day have I caused the reproach of Egypt to pass from you;" and as then it was said that the "hosts of Jehovah went out of the land of Egypt," so at Gilgal the angel of Jehovah comes as Captain of Jehovah's host.

We shall find help, then, surely, in comparing these two passages, the one, the departure from Egypt and the entrance into the wilderness; the other, the departure from the wilderness and the entrance into Canaan. The wilderness was but necessary discipline by the way; the land is the end of the way, and rest.

We have already looked at the passage of the Sea, and found in it the vivid representation of the truth in Romans, that as dead with Christ we are dead to sin and to law. It is the backward glance at what we are brought out from; and resurrection with Christ, though implied, is not dwelt on. This is exactly the case in Romans: we have just suggested the "newness of life," "the likeness of His resurrection" in which we are called to walk; but we must go on to Colossians to find "risen with Christ" put in direct antithesis to "dead with Christ." Ephesians carries us on still further to "seated together in Him in heavenly places," and the side of truth in Romans, "dead with Christ," is now omitted. The New Testament, like the Old, takes these things, as it were, apart, that we may consider them better.

Resurrection with Christ is at Jordan very strikingly shown forth, but our being dead with Christ is not omitted; we go on also, as in Ephesians, into the land. Thus the whole truth is put together here.

We must examine it, however, now in detail.

(i.) Strikingly and beautifully, in the first place, we have the ark of the Lord put in its unique place, as that which alone does the work, and manifests its

days that the officers went through the camp; and they charged the people, saying, When ye see the [g] ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a [h] space between you and it of about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye go; for ye have not gone this way heretofore. And Joshua said unto the people, [i] Sanctify yourselves; for to-morrow will Jehovah do wonders among you. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [j] This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with [k] Moses, so will I be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the waters of Jordan, ye shall [l] stand still in Jordan. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of Jehovah your God. And Joshua said, Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail dispossess from before you the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the [m] Lord of all the earth passeth before you into Jordan. And now take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And it shall be, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, the waters of Jordan, even the waters that come down from above, shall be [n] cut off, and stand in a heap.

[g] Num. 10. 33. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4. Heb. 6. 20.

[h] *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 20-23.

[i] Ex. 19. 10. *cf.* Heb. 10. 22.

[j] ch. 4. 14. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.

[k] ch. 1. 17. 2 Kings 2. 9, 10. *cf.* Jno. 16. 7.

[l] *cf.* Jno. 10. 11.

[m] Gen. 14. 19. Ps. 24. 1.

[n] *cf.* Rom. 8. 1 with Ps. 22. 1.

power in behalf of the people. This is jealously maintained. Two thousand cubits separate between it, and those that walk in the track it opens. This two thousand is, of course, $2 \times 10^3$, and may speak to us of *realized capacity for salvation:* this is indeed the impassable distance between the cross and all that would seem to approach it. Let us remember what this ark is: that it not merely represents the throne of the Lord, but that it carries the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat,—that it is the throne of grace founded on propitiation. How necessary to maintain in its full breadth this separation between that peerless work and all else! How else should we know the way by which we should go?

And now Joshua is to be honored in the sight of all Israel, and it is to be shown that God is with him. The link is plain enough spiritually; the living Christ glorified in what His death accomplishes. All enemies must give way when God manifests Himself for Christ, in behalf of His people. Seven nations here exhibit the complete power of the enemy, only to show the power of the Lord supreme above it.

The ark too is the throne of the "Lord of all the earth." We have seen that Satan acts through the power of the world to hinder our entrance into the heavenly portion. But though he has usurped power over the world through

And it was so, that when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant being before the people, and when they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the edge of the water,—and Jordan [o] overfloweth all its banks all the days of harvest,—the waters that came down from above stood [and] rose up in a heap, far away, at the city Adam, that is beside [p] Zarethan; and those that went down to the sea of the Arabah, even the salt sea, were completely cut off; and the people passed over opposite Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all Israel passed over on [q] dry ground, until all the nation had quite passed over Jordan.

o Ps. 42. 7.

p 1 Kings 7. 46.

q Ex. 14. 29.

2. (iv. 1–18.) The memorial stones: "dead with Christ" in His death.

[2] And it was so, when all the nation had quite passed over Jordan, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you [r] twelve men out of the people, from every tribe a man, and command them, saying, Take hence out of the midst of Jordan, from the place in which the priests' feet stood firm, twelve [s] stones, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging-place, where ye shall lodge this night. And Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, [t] out of every tribe a man; and said unto them, Pass over before the ark of Jehovah your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your [u] children shall ask in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall say

r ch. 3. 12.

s *cf.* Matt 26. 26–29.

t *cf.* Ex. 28. 17–21. 1 Kings 18. 31.

u ver. 21. Ex. 13. 14. Ps. 78. 4. Eph. 6. 4.

man's lust to which he ministers, the earth is yet the Lord's, and owns His sway. He maketh all things work together for good to them that love Him, and godliness to have the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. Our home is not on earth, but who enjoys even things here as he who can look up to the Lord of heaven and earth as his Father? The bitterest pain is eased, the heaviest blow finds us shielded from it, the front of an enemy becomes the salutation of a friend, when God is seen as everywhere, and every where for us; and this is what Ephesians, the book of the heavenly places, itself reminds us of—"one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (ch. iv. 6): not an unsuited truth to keep the dust of the world out of your eyes as you march to the conquest of the heavenly places!

Jordan fills all its banks all the time of harvest: for Christ, when He rolled back its stream for us, death had all its terrors. But its flood is stopped, its waters are heaped very far off, so that they should not come near His people at their crossing. It was our death He bore: it is taken then out of the way; we pass over to our inheritance, untouched and unhindered by it.

(ii.) This passage is ever to be remembered. Effected once for all, it is to be continually recalled. Joshua therefore commands twelve men, one being chosen of each of the twelve tribes, so as to represent clearly the whole of them, to take up out of the bed of the river, from the place in which the priests' feet stand firm, twelve stones, to be placed as a memorial in the lodging-place they

unto them that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel forever. And the children of Israel did so, as Joshua had commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as Jehovah spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; and they carried them over with them into the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the [v]midst of Jordan, in the place where the priests' feet stood, who bare the ark of the covenant: and there they are unto this day. And

v *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

occupy that night. Twelve other stones Joshua has set up in the bed of Jordan at the same spot; but although they also clearly are representative, they are not connected with these *living* representatives: and in this the minute accuracy of the type is apparent. For the spiritual mind, the spiritual meaning, and the most perfect spiritual order, govern all.

Christ has been through death for us, and that death was our death: it was burdened with the weight of our sins, a death of wrath and curse, to deliver the children of wrath. Dying thus in our stead, we who believe in Him have died—are dead—with Him. It is not an individual experience; it is not *experience* at all: it is a fact independent even of our faith in it, but our faith in which imports much as to the character of our Christianity. We have died with Him, not die ourselves, but *are* dead,—"dead to sin," "dead to the law," "crucified to the world," "our old man crucified with Him" (Rom. vi., vii.; Gal. vi. 14): these are absolute statements of Scripture, true of every real Christian, and by faith to be translated into the sphere of practice: "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. vi. 11, *Gk.*)

Here are the stones in the bed of the river, with which no living personality is connected, because they speak of death, not life; yet with which is connected the thought of representation, because it is in our Representative we died. We *reckon* ourselves dead, not feel or find: we impute that (upon God's warrant) to be true which experience does not assent to, for it knows nothing of it; it is not within its sphere to know. How can we *experience* the death of Christ? We believe in it, and rejoice believing; we believe what it has accomplished for us, and experience its practical value for our souls.

Alive in Christ before God, we can look back upon what we were, and own it, yet refuse it. It is *our old man* that was crucified with Christ. As in the resurrection-day that (not far off) beckons us, we shall be able to look back upon our present selves as the men that were, so are we able to look back upon what we were before conversion as "our old man." It is singular, however, not plural, for it is what we were in Adam that is intended by this, and there was no "second man" till Christ. We are now in Christ, a new creation, and so with a new standing. In Christ's death we died out of the old. The "flesh" is in us, and "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 Jno. i. 8), but we must distinguish between "flesh" and the "old man," which is never spoken of as in us, but as "put off" (Eph. iv. 22, *Gk;* Col. iii. 9), even as in natural death the "tabernacle" is put off. (2 Pet. i. 14.) The flesh is in us, but we are not in it (Rom. viii. 9), not identified with it before God: the *nature* is there, but the *person* has passed away; we are alive in Christ Jesus.

This, then, is what we find in the twelve stones in Jordan; how distinctly is shown the change that has taken place, when now twelve *other* stones are taken from the bed of Jordan to be set upon the dry ground. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

the priests who bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until all was finished that Jehovah had commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. And the people hasted and passed over. And it was so, when all the people had quite passed over, that the ark of Jehovah passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people. And the [w] children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over in array before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken unto them: about forty thousand, armed for war, passed over before Jehovah unto battle, to the plains of Jericho. In that day, Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. And Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. And Joshua commanded the priests, saying, Come up out of Jordan. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah had come up out of the midst of Jordan, [and] the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry ground, that the waters of Jordan [x] returned unto their place, and flowed over all its banks as before.

w ch. 1. 12-18.

x Ex. 14. 26-28. *cf.* Jno. 3. 36.

But we must remember that it is in Christ he is looked at; and this alone can justify the absoluteness of the expressions. If we make it read, "If any man be converted," or born again, and think simply of condition as experience declares it to us, who can say, "*all* things"? There is a change indeed, a marvelous change, as "new creature" testifies: the man in Christ *is* a man born again, and a possessor of eternal life; but, as already said, he has still the flesh in him, even when he has the Spirit; "and the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye should not"—not "cannot"—"do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17.) Looked at in Christ, however, we are seen as only in the new nature, not the old; and thus "*all* things new" cannot be too absolute.

The living men, therefore, are identified with these stones, which are taken out of Jordan and put on the Canaan side of the river. We are risen with Christ out of death: once more what is true of Christ is on that account true of His people. They are associated with Christ in His triumph over death, and in the new place He has taken. Resurrection is more than receiving a new life,—not a deeper, but a *further* thing; and always distinguished from it: "He hath quickened us together with Christ," says the apostle, "and raised us up together." (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) And in Colossians we find *death* contrasted with *life* (quickening), as *burial* with *resurrection*. (Chap. ii. 12, 13.) Burial is the recognition of death; resurrection, of life out of it. Burial is putting the dead into the place of death and away from the living. Resurrection is, on the other hand, the bringing the living out of the place of the dead *into* that of the living. Christianity separates (as Judaism did not) the living from the dead, and the saint from the world. Christ is the Heavenly; and "as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 48.) "They are not of the world," He says, "even as I am not of the world." (Jno. xvii. 14, 16.)

And these things are to be remembered. We *are* dead; we must *reckon* ourselves dead. The memorial stones were not intended more strictly for Israel's eyes than the admonition of them is for us. They "*happened* unto them for types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are

3. (Iv. 19-v.) Deliverance fully realized, as brought into the land.

a (Iv. 19-24.) The place of power.

b (v. 1.) The enemy quails.

[3] (*a*) And the people came up out of Jordan on the [y] tenth [day] of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they had taken out of Jordan did Joshua set up in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your [z] children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry ground. For Jehovah your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as Jehovah your God had done to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us till we were passed over; that all the peoples of the earth might know that Jehovah's hand is mighty; that ye might fear [a] Jehovah your God continually.

(*b*) And it was so, when all the kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan westward, and all the kings of the [b] Canaanites that were by the sea, heard that Jehovah had dried up the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel, till they were passed over, that their heart [c] melted, and there was no spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

y Ex. 12. 3.

z ver. 6.

a 1 Pet. 1. 17-21.

b Ex. 15. 14.

c ch. 2. 11. ch. 7. 5.

come." We ought to know them: we are responsible to walk in the power of this knowledge.

Only for the people of God is Jordan dried: they having passed through, it returns to its strength, and flows over all its banks as it did before.

(iii.) The people are now, as it were, on resurrection-ground. What the passage through the Sea implied is now accomplished: deliverance is now for the first time fully realized. True, there are now enemies before them, while at the Red Sea they were behind them; and the river now behind them cuts them off from retreat. God's word to us is also, "Forward!" and in all the panoply of God which we are exhorted to put on, there is *no armor for the back*. All depends upon this for us, and with our faces to the foe we shall never be beaten.

(*a*) Gilgal is their first camp in Canaan, where the stones are pitched; and to it after their battles they constantly return. It is their impregnable stronghold, and base of support. How should they not be strong in the remembrance of that marvelous deliverance! God is for them: who shall be against them? who shall force them back into that flood through which He has so marvelously brought them? It would be *His* dishonor. The stones abide here solidly with their firm assurance: "Israel came over this Jordan on dry ground." Thus "as the hills are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." To reach *them* their enemies must strike through *Him!*

For us also the place of resurrection is our impregnable defense: it is upon this Rock Christ builds His church, and the gates of hades cannot prevail against it. We are dead with Him, and out of the old creation; risen with Him, and beyond death itself. Nay, we are "seated together in Him in the heavenly places,"—we have a secure lodgment, whence not all the power of the enemy can drive us back. But from thence the pleasant land our portion lies before us, and if there are foes to meet, we have the assurance that wherever we plant our foot, the land is our own.

(*b*) The news of the passage of Jordan fills the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites with terror; their hearts melt, and there is no spirit left in them. Satan knows well with whom in all this conflict he has really to do, and before the strength of the Lord he cowers. When we go forth in our own, he lifts his

*c* (v. 2-9.) Circumcision renewed in the land: the new consecration.

(*c*) At that time, Jehovah said unto Joshua, Make thee flint knives, and [d] circumcise the children of Israel again a second time. And Joshua made him flint knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised [them]: all the people that came out of Egypt, [that were] males, [even] all the men of war, had [e] died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out had been circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had [f] not circumcised. For the chil-

*d cf.* Col. 2. 11. Col. 3. 5.

*e* Num. 14. 29. Num. 26. 64, 65.

*f cf.* Gen. 17. 14. 1 Tim. 3. 4, 5.

head again; and thus we go on now to learn afresh the lesson of circumcision, as we need to realize it afresh in every new sphere on which we enter.

(*c*) And here we come to that from which Gilgal gets its name. It is when Israel is circumcised afresh at the hill of the foreskins that God says, "This day have I rolled away from you the reproach of Egypt:" and so the place is called Gilgal, "a rolling away."

But what was the reproach of Egypt? If we realize the whole connection here, there can hardly be a doubt that it was the reproach of their bondage there which circumcision now, the token of their covenant with Jehovah, rolls away. For us this is to be a type and an admonition, and well it may be.

The bondage in Egypt answers to the natural condition as experienced in its bitterness by the awakened man. Egypt is the world in its independence of God, walking by its own light, doing its own will, following its own way. And this is *sin:* "we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." Our way is the way of death; and this death He had to take for our salvation. When the soul is once awakened by God's grace, the misery of our own way is felt as the bitterest bondage, but we cannot, at will, deliver ourselves. God must come in, and by redemption break our bonds, and set us free.

Israel had long left Egypt, however, and were then a circumcised people. Circumcision is the judgment of the flesh, the breaking of confidence in it, the putting it off as judged by the cross. (Phil. iii. 3; Col. ii. 11; Gen. xvii., *notes.*) But this, if real, is the breaking of our *wills* therefore, that we may be yielded up to Another's perfect will. It is the principle of holiness, of consecration; though in the consciousness of utter weakness, in which His strength alone can be perfected.

Israel came out of Egypt a circumcised people, as souls in the first joy of salvation devote themselves to God. But they came into a wilderness in which they lingered, refusing to go into the land; and in the wilderness lost largely their circumcised character. In the wilderness they had not circumcised: the toil of the way, as it seems, had pleaded excuse from a painful rite, and it had dropped out, as it would appear, unnoticed. Now, in the land, as soon as they reach it, the word of the Lord arouses them to their condition. Uncircumcised, they could only be, but for the Lord's grace, cut off as outside His covenant. Grace alone it is that here comes in for them, and restores the broken link: how blessed to see in the face of all this assurance of man's helplessness and ruin the grace of God thus shining forth!

Power for the mortification of the flesh,—power to keep it, that is, in the place of death that belongs to it,—cannot be maintained by the joy merely of salvation, of deliverance from Egypt. There must be entrance into the land, appropriation of a heavenly portion, the joy of what lies beyond that world, subject to death, through which we pass. Otherwise we get quietly accustomed to the fact of deliverance, and the grey hairs of the desert show that the vigor of life has declined. The uncircumcised cannot eat the passover: redemption fails

dren of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till the whole nation was consumed, [even] the men of war that came out of Egypt, because they obeyed not Jehovah's voice: unto whom Jehovah [g] sware that he would not let them see the land that Jehovah had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children whom he had raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass when all the nation had been circumcised completely, that they abode still in their place in the camp till they were whole. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away from you the [h] reproach of Egypt. And the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

[g] Ps. 95. 10, 11. Heb. 3. 18.

[h] *ctr.* Heb. 11. 26.

*d* (v. 10-12.) The ceasing of manna, & the new experience.

(*d*) And the children of Israel encamped at [i] Gilgal, and kept the [j] passover the fourteenth day of the month at even, in the plains of Jericho. And they ate of the [k] old corn of the land the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn the self-same day. And the manna [l] ceased on the morrow, when they ate of the old corn of the land; nor had the children of Israel manna any more; and they ate of the produce of the land of Canaan that year.

[i] ch. 9. 6.

[j] Ex. 12. 21.

[k] *cf.* Col. 3. 1. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Heb. 2. 9.

[l] 2 Cor. 5. 16.

more and more to minister to us; the pilgrimage becomes a toil, less and less relieved.

For this there is no remedy till the land is reached, and the fullness of our blessing spreads itself before eager eyes. Then, as in a moment, circumcision is recovered. "If then ye be risen with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things that are upon the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God . . . *Mortify, therefore*, your members which are upon the earth." (Col. iii. 1–5.) Here is the ground of circumcision realized and maintained. Its power lies in the development of a life which is hid with Christ in God, and must find its satisfaction in that which is heavenly and eternal. Here, on the other side of Jordan, consecration becomes easy, and strength is renewed.

Cowles well calls our attention to this act of Joshua in circumcising the men of war at this point as, humanly speaking, "a *most unmilitary act.*" "With apparently not the least fear lest the Canaanites should muster their forces, and fall suddenly upon them—with a deep feeling obviously that his first concern was to be right before God, and to have all his soldiers and people right in heart, and true to every precept of their God, he suspended all military movements; gave his enemies time to recover from their panic; halted his army, not only for some days of circumcision, but for the feast of the passover, seven days, —all as if religion was infinitely more than military strategy—as it truly was."

For us, how much more important that we should tarry here by the banks of Jordan, until we are in our place before God, and have our souls fed, and our spiritual strength renewed. All this connects with the truth before us: "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

(*d*) Accordingly we have now brought together two things which give us the beginning and the end of the blessings of redemption, the passover and the old corn of the land. In the first, we are looking back to the work that sheltered

*e* (v. 13-15.) Jehovah with His people.

(*e*) And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, a [m] man standing over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as [n] captain of Jehovah's host am I now come. And Joshua [o] fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto

*m* Gen. 18.2. Gen. 32.24. Ex. 15. 3.

*n* *cf.* Heb. 2. 10. Ex. 12. 41. Is. 55. 4.

*o* Ex. 3. 5, 6.

us in Egypt, feeding on the lamb of atonement, remembering to keep the feast with the unleavened bread also of sincerity and truth. But along with this there is a new experience: the manna ceases the day after the passover, and they eat of the old corn of the land to which they have come,—unleavened cakes and parched corn. It is still, of course, typically Christ, for He is all the food of the soul; but it is no more the bread from heaven, Christ humbled as come down into the world. This land being typically heaven, it is the produce of the land itself, a heavenly Christ *in* heaven. It is ours not merely to know Him as come down into the world, but to know Him also as gone up where He was before. He is the same blessed Person, whom circumstances cannot change, and this is our joy to know. Were He in glory *different* from the One we have seen on earth, then we could not know Him now at all, for our knowledge of Him was gained in His humiliation here; and this is what the manna carried into Canaan, the "hidden manna" of Revelation, emphasizes for us. Yes, He is the same, unchanged, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; but for that very reason, what joy and satisfaction to the heart to follow Him in faith beyond the clouds that hid Him from the disciples gazing after Him as He went up, and to know Him in His present glory, with the divine glory in His face!

This, as the apostle tells us, is the only Christ that now we can know· "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; even though we have known *Christ* after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more." (2 Cor. v. 16.) For there is but one Christ, not two: and He is in heaven: blessed be God, the very One who wrought redemption; Priest on earth to do it; Priest now within the sanctuary, and upon the throne.

That He is still Man this old corn of the land assures us; and what sustenance for our souls to know Him there, "faithful to Him that appointed Him," bearing us upon His heart, as the typical high-priest bore the tribal names on the jewels of the breastplate. What blessedness to know that He is there also God still incarnate, the "very image of the Invisible," "the effulgence of His glory"! This is indeed wondrous food for the sustenance of the new life; manna still, but in its golden vessel in the ark: food which from the hidden sanctuary makes the life of him who partakes of it practically a life hid with Christ in God,—a life which shall be manifested only when Christ who is our life shall appear, and we shall appear with Him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.)

(*e*) And now, before the beginning of a conflict which is imminent, the angel of Jehovah appears to Joshua as the Leader of Jehovah's host. Commentators in general seem to decide that this host is angelic, and Keil to the reminder that Israel are spoken of as the hosts of the Lord when they come out of Egypt, makes the strange reply that the Israelites are "never called the host of the Lord in the singular." Now in Dan. viii., Keil himself agrees that Israel are called the "host of heaven," and there is even seen a "prince of the host," as here, who is clearly Christ. All that can be said against this is, that it is figurative language: and that is no doubt true; but the figure seems to be more in their being called the host of *heaven*, that is, compared to this, which leaves the rest scarcely affected.

When he says "*never* called," moreover, it is only in Ex. xii. that they are called so in the *plural:* why then should they not be once called this here, and no more?

his servant? And the captain of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

(VI.)

The fall of Jericho: of the world (foreseen by faith.)

4. Now Jericho was [p]shut up and barred because of the children of Israel: none went out and none came in. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho and her king, [and] the mighty men of valor. And ye shall go round the city, all the men of war, encompassing the city once: thus shalt thou do [q]six days. And seven priests shall bear before the [r]ark

p ch. 2. 7. 2 Kings 6. 25.

q Gen. 7. 4.

r ch. 4. 18.

We have seen, too, that this entrance into Canaan, completing the deliverance out of Egypt, recalls some of its features very distinctly. The reproach of Egypt is but now rolled off. The drying up of Jordan repeats the miracle of the Sea. What more natural than that the "hosts of the Lord" (which seems already to look forward to the warfare now at hand) should reappear after their long burial in the wilderness as the "host of the Lord" under their heavenly Leader?

Even a reason for the slight change from "hosts" to "host" may be suggested. In Egypt their number, to which they had so wonderfully increased, spite of all the opposition of the enemy, might naturally be implied by the plural. The wilderness, on the other hand, had not allowed even ordinary increase; but its discipline had at last compacted and unified them; the generation that went into the land with Joshua was in this respect superior perhaps to any other.

Israel, then, is Jehovah's host, at the head of which Jehovah is putting Himself. He has unsheathed the sword, and the conflict to follow He Himself leads His people into; the judgment they execute is His judgment. If Joshua already speaks of Christ in us, it may seem strange that we should have Another introduced here, higher than Joshua, and the real leader of the people. We have already found, however, double representations of Christ contemporaneous with one another. Here if Joshua represent Christ in us, it may be yet necessary, because of our readiness to mistake, to guard this by showing us another Christ external to us to whom that which we account to be the Christ within yields the first place. For in all this line of things we have to remember that we have to do with those subjective experiences in which we are prone to go astray, and need, perpetually, correction by the Word. If we speak of Christ in us, it may easily be that impulses not really of Christ may simulate His voice, and that we may need the warning emphasized that there is a Voice external to us altogether, to which before all we must be in subjection. Christ is every where the same, and His Voice, wherever heard, must be of equal authority; but just on that very account what is of Christ in us will conform itself to, and own, the authority of the Christ without us, speaking by His Spirit through His Word. Here, indeed, the lowliest spirit becomes us, prostration of self, and the unshod foot. Only so can we be led surely, preserved alike from rationalism and from fanaticism, in a path of steady progress and of assured victory.

4. The fall of Jericho follows. We have seen it to be a special type of the world: to man, a savor of a sweet smell, in truth, a most fertile and attractive place, yet by the river of death, and for which beyond death lay judgment in the camp of Israel. The judgment had now come near, and in the details of it we see evident reference to the judgment of the world that shall be, but which faith anticipating makes a present thing. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 Jno. v. 4.)

Thus we have a prophetic and a present significance. As to the prophetic, we have to remember that it is of course not the judgment of the great white throne

[s] seven trumpets of jubilee; and on the seventh day ye shall go round the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall be, when they make a long blast with the horn of jubilee, and when ye hear the voice of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a loud shout; and the wall of the city shall fall flat; and the people shall go up, every one straight before him. And Joshua called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of jubilee before the ark of Jehovah. And they said unto the people, Pass on: go round the city; and let the armed men pass on before Jehovah's ark. And so it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of jubilee before Jehovah passed on, and blew with the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went after them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets, and the rear-guard came after the ark: they blew with the trumpets as they marched. And Joshua commanded the people, saying, Ye shall [t] not shout, nor let your voice be heard, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth until the day I say unto you, Shout: then shall ye shout. And the ark of Jehovah went round the city, encompassing it once; and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

[s] Lev. 25. 9. Num. 10. 1. *cf.* Jas. 5. 7.

[t] *cf.* Matt. 12. 19.

that is presented here. Then the heavens and the earth shall flee away from before the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and the *dead*—that is, those not raised in the resurrection of the blessed, a whole millennium before—small and great, stand before God to be judged out of the books, according to their works. But there is a judgment of the *quick* (the living) also, at the former time, when the Lord appears; and here not only do the "armies that are in heaven" follow in the train of their glorious Leader, but Israel also take their own place once more as of old, as solemn executioners of God's sentence upon the ripened iniquity of the nations. (Comp. Rev. xix., xx. with Zech. xii. 6, xiv. 14; Mic. v. 7–9; Obad. 14–21.) Thus Israel in the book of Joshua may well be here a type of Israel in the coming day: a day which in the book of Revelation the *seven trumpets* usher in (chap. viii.–xi. 18), as here for seven days ring out the trumpets which precede the ark, the throne of the Lord, and on the seventh day, during seven circuits.

Note, too, that they are "trumpets of *jubilee*." The word used here is the regular word for that, and there is no real warrant for "rams' horns," though the revisers of the common version have retained it. The trumpet was, no doubt, a cornet or horn, and is expressly called "horn" in the fifth verse ("horn of jubilee"); but this very verse proves that *jobel* does not mean "ram's horn;" for "horn of ram's horn," would hardly do, and the revisers could only settle the difficulty by dropping one of the words. That it was a "horn" may, according to the recognized idea of power associated with this, direct our attention to the Word of God, which, whether men recognize it or not, is that by which all events are governed, and in obedience to which the lingering judgment surely comes at last.

But "jubilee" seems in unnatural association with this thought of judgment; and here, no doubt, has been the reason for discarding the word. The prophetic meaning, if grasped, clears up at once the difficulty, and converts it into one of

And Joshua arose [u]early in the morning, and the priests took up Jehovah's ark. And the seven priests, bearing the seven trumpets of jubilee before the ark of Jehovah, went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them, and the rear-guard came after the ark of Jehovah: they blew with the trumpets as they went on. And the second day they went round the city once, and returned unto the camp: so they did six days.

And it came to pass that on the seventh day they arose early, about sunrise, and went round the city after the same manner seven times: on that day only they went round the city seven times. And it came to pass, at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, [v]Shout: for Jehovah hath given you the city. And the city shall be under [w]ban,—it and all that is in it, to Jehovah. Only [x]Rahab the harlot shall live,—she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. But [y]keep yourselves in any wise from that which is under ban, lest ye come under ban in taking of that which is banned, and bring the [z]camp of Israel under ban, and trouble it. And all the [a]silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy unto Jehovah: they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah. So the people shouted when they blew with the trumpets; and it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpets, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall [b]fell down flat, and the people went up into the city,—every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they destroyed [c]under

[u] ch. 3. 1. ver. 15. *cf.* Mark 1. 35.

[v] 2 Chron. 13. 14, 15.

[w] 1 Sam. 15. 3.

[x] ch. 2. 14. *cf.* Gen. 19. 29.

[y] Deut. 7. 26. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 17. Jas. 1. 27 Jno. 17. 15–19.

[z] ch. 7. 11. 1 Cor. 5. 6.

[a] Num. 31. 50.

[b] Heb. 11. 30.

[c] Ex. 25. 19. 1 Sam. 15. 1.

the strongest arguments for the deeper view. Earth's jubilee not only lies beyond the judgment of the nations, but involves and calls for it. God's blessing cannot rest upon an unpurged scene; and with the casting out of the "prince of this world," the whole system of it, which he sustains and inspires, must come to an end. And in this end God's hand must be seen against it. To use the symbol of the prophet, the stone cut out without hands, the kingdom of Christ, which no human power can introduce, must first dash to pieces the image (of Gentile empire) before it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. (Dan. ii.)

Thus every voice of nearing judgment is yet a trumpet of jubilee. Upon the wreck of what at best is but the lifeless form of true humanity, is to be established the glory of the kingdom of the Son of Man.

On the seventh day, at the end of the seven circuits of the city, with the final blast of the trumpet and the people's shout, the walls fall flat; the breath of the Lord has smitten down their defense, and the city is taken. So in the last days will the Lord, as prophecy shows, Himself intervene for His people, and the power of the world be prostrate as in a moment. Yet, as we hear of a spared Rahab in the type, so in the antitype are there those spared among the nations (Is. lxvi. 19; Matt. xxv. 31–40); and the sessional judgment prophesied in Matthew reads much like the story of Rahab: "I was a stranger, and ye took Me in, . . . I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me."

ban all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword. And Joshua said unto the two men that had spied out the land, Go into the harlot's house, and [d] bring out thence the woman and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men, the spies, went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had: they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And the city they burned with fire, and all that was therein; but the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of Jehovah's house. But Rahab the harlot, and her father's house, and all that she had, Joshua saved alive; and she [e] dwelleth in Israel unto this day, because she hid the messengers that Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

And Joshua charged them with an oath at that time, saying, [f] Cursed be the man before Jehovah who shall rise up and build this city Jericho! With his first-born shall he lay the foundation, and with his youngest son shall he set up its gates. And Jehovah was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.

[d] Heb. 11. 31.

[e] Matt. 1. 5.

[f] 1 Kings 16. 34. *cf.* Gal. 2. 18.

This judgment of the world by God stamps it for faith already with its character. The ground of judgment is, as with all the heathen, primarily the rejection of God, which leads them into idolatry, the changing the Creator into an image of the creature, for the gratification in fact of their own lusts and passions without rebuke. The rejection of Christ when He came was but this primal sin in a form aggravated in proportion to the display of His glory, in the fullness of grace and truth. Hence the cross was the judgment of the world, a sentence it pronounced upon itself long since, though the long-suffering of God has delayed its execution. But for him who believes upon the Crucified One as Son of God the world is overcome. (1 Jno. v. 5.) "God forbid," says the apostle, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.)

Egypt indeed, which is the world, has been long since by Israel left behind; but as we have seen in other ways, here alone is the complete realization of this deliverance. Passing the sea, they had come into the wilderness, and such is the world for the redeemed of the Lord. But the wilderness in its very nature is not the place of satisfaction for the heart, which the land is; the land flowing with milk and honey, their inheritance and rest. Looked at as in the wilderness, the people of God are still in the world, and with all its barrenness the heart can seek its own in it. Power there must be found in that which is beyond it. We must be fully outside that which is to be judged, to accept heartily that judgment; and thus it is that what seems strange at first sight is most fully in order, that it is on the entrance into the land that Jericho falls.

It is the first thing also for the conquest of the land, because, as we have seen, the conflict in heavenly places is with the "rulers of the darkness of this world;" and therefore the judgment of the world is the first necessity for successful warfare. We shall have this illustrated for us and emphasized in the very next section; and we must remember it as a practical reality, if this book of Joshua is to be translated for us into living experience. God grant that it may be so; for otherwise all these things so blessed in themselves will be but a shame and reproach and witness against us.

The details of the fall of Jericho seem *not*, however, to be facts of present experience, but prophetic of actual judgment when it comes; and this is quite as we

Divine government: Achan and Ai. 1. (vii.) Israel's unity in responsibility, as shown by one transgression.

(VII., VIII.)

5. [1](a) But the children of Israel [g] acted unfaithfully about the devoted thing; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of [h] Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the devoted thing; and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of [i] Israel.

[g] Acts 5. 1-11.
[h] Gen.38.30.
[i] Lev. 4. 13. Num.16.22.

a (v. 1.) The rebel.

might expect. We see by them, however, that the people of God have to maintain the testimony as to these things: compassing the city and blowing the trumpets until the city falls; although it be only in the meantime to awaken the scorn of the men of the world, as they hear the frequent alarm of that which seems never to come. But it comes, comes steadily nearer, is surely even now at the door, and how urgent should be our testimony, which, if of no effect upon the mass, yet helps to fill Rahab's house, where the true scarlet line, as despicable in men's eyes as that of old, shields with the power of the Almighty the prisoners of hope.

5. We have now a very different lesson, in which Ai and Achan are united together. Ai, in its meaning, a "heap,"—to the present time known as *Et-Tell*, "the heap,"—naturally enough connects it with Jericho, just reduced to one; still more when we remember that the "principalities and powers in heavenly places," with whom our conflict is, are the "rulers of the darkness of this world," and that these cities, therefore, naturally represent the world in some shape. Ai is the world seen in its ruin as faith sees it, which yet apart from God's presence with us we are not able to overcome. Unjudged evil in us will yet make the world too strong for us, and this the sin of Achan does for Israel.

(i.) The unity of Israel in God's sight is also clearly shown. As one sin ruined the world at first, so here one sin unjudged brings judgment upon all Israel. But it is plain also that there is carelessness otherwise, judging by the report of the spies instead of taking counsel of the Lord, and counting on their own strength for an enemy of little power,—our own behavior, alas! too often, and a simple reason why small difficulties often overcome us, while greater ones, casting us on God, are in His strength overcome.

But Israel's unity, as realized in this way, made them every one in very deed his brother's keeper, and enforced powerfully upon them a care for holiness such as hardly any thing else could be imagined to produce. While an habitual walk with God, step by step, according to his direction, would be the only possible rule for the detection of whatever stood in the way of blessing, the only condition of success.

(a) To come to details: we have first of all the rebel pointed out to us, with his genealogy, which is carefully repeated afterward when his sin is brought to light. Doubtless this has a meaning: whether we can trace it or not is another matter. But our own descent from Adam has much to do with our being sinners: "heredity," great word as it is now in the mouths of men of science so-called, is found in what it represents in Scripture just as much. The difference is that what is mere "natural" science takes account only of nature, leaves out God, and binds all together in a fatalistic succession under materialistic law. Upon this understanding of it, sin disappears: it is misfortune. God disappears on the other side: He would be anomalous in such a scheme; and, instead of accounting for any thing, would need Himself to be accounted for. The iron wheel grinds out man's destiny; and he is part of the wheel: how can he complain?

Heredity there is, however, and in the history of a sinner God counts his ancestry,—his birth, and, as men say now, his environment. For these, moreover, he is not condemned: thus far Scripture agrees with materialism. But when man acts *according to* the nature he is born with, and *according to* his environment, then for this it declares him guilty, and to be punished! Somehow man is responsible to live *contrary to* his very nature *morally*, and to stem

*b* (2-5.) Defeat.

(*b*) And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, in front of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and [j] spy out the land. And the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, [k] Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai: make not all the people toil thither, for they are few. And there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; and they [l] fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty-six men; and they pursued them from before the gate to Shebarim, and smote them on the descent; and the heart of the people [m] melted and became as water.

*c* (6-15.) The thing revealed in the presence of the Lord.

(*c*) And Joshua [n] rent his clothes, and [o] fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of Jehovah until evening,—he and the elders of Israel; and they cast dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas! O Lord Jehovah, [p] why hast thou brought, as thou hast, this people over Jordan, to give us up into the hand of the

[j] ch. 2. 1.

[k] *cf.* ch. 8. 1. Judg. 20. 18-23. 1 Cor. 10. 12. *cfr.* Judg. 7. 2, 4-8. 1 Sam. 17. 40-45. Phil. 3. 3. Phil. 4. 13.

[l] Deut. 28. 25. 1 Sam. 4. 2, 10.

[m] chap. 5. 1.

[n] Lev. 13. 45. 1 Sam. 5. 12. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 2. 2 Cor. 12. 21.

[o] Num. 20. 6.

[p] Ex. 5. 22.

the stream he is in. And Scripture not only declares this, but a voice within man, spite of all reasonings, adds its confirmation, and makes out the man obedient to his nature to be disobedient to his God!

And "the testimony of two is true." And God can appeal to man's reason and conscience against himself, that there is, after all, in him that which should be for God, and power that he should have from God, if he has not. That he cannot have power but from God, cannot have it in independency, is simple, and the law of creaturehood; and of this he has no title to complain.

Walking apart from God, his nature and his environment govern him absolutely: and thus a sinner's genealogy counts for much. Nay, a saint slipping away from God falls under the same iron rule, and his conduct may be accounted for after the "scientific" fashion, without any more excuse for the one than for the other. This much, without going further, Achan's genealogy as given here may preach to us.

(*b*) Next we hear of Ai. It is beside Beth-aven, the "house of vanity," and in front of Bethel, the "house of God." In Abram's time, when he first comes into the land, Bethel and Ai lie on either side of him, and thus opposed to one another. (Gen. xii.) Ai is known plainly by what it associates itself with and what it is opposed to, and the stamp of the world is evidently upon it.

Jericho the greater has been overcome: they think but little of Ai; if the world has been judged in gross, it may be supposed a little thing to overcome it in detail, in the little things in which it still presents itself in our path. Just here, and perhaps on this very account, we may suffer unexpected defeat. Israel's detachment of two or three thousand turn their backs before the men of Ai, who smite them on the descent—we are always apt to be smitten upon the descent,—and inflict a loss of thirty-six men, a number which, if small, yet plainly speaks of the government of God (3 x 12) against them. In this there is hope, however, for those that know Him.

(*c*) And Joshua turns to Him at once. Yet he is in dismay at so unforeseen a calamity; all the more as he knows no reason for it. Alas! how easily we slip out of communion with God, and are not aware of it! "Deliver me from secret faults," says the psalmist. How easily, too, with most of us, God's ways, if in the dark, provoke murmuring! How unbelief dogs faith, as if it were its shadow! After all God's glorious deeds, one little check, and the whole future darkens. Yet even with its burden of unbelief on its back, faith is seen in its turning to God; and in His presence finds deliverance.

Amorites, to destroy us? [q] would we had been content, and dwelt beyond Jordan! Ah, Lord! what shall I say, after Israel have turned their backs before their enemies? And the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do for thy [r] great name?

And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Rise up! why is it that thou art lying upon thy face? [s] Israel hath sinned; yea, they have even transgressed my covenant which I commanded them, and have taken even of the devoted thing, and stolen it, and dissembled also, and put it even among their stuff. And the children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies: they turn their backs before their enemies, because they have come [t] under the ban: I will not any more be with you, except ye destroy from among you the devoted thing. Rise: sanctify the people; and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow; for thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: The devoted thing is in thy midst, O Israel: thou wilt not be able to stand before thine enemies until ye put away the devoted thing out of your midst. And in the morning ye shall be brought near by your tribes; and it shall be that the tribe Jehovah taketh shall present itself by families, and the family that Jehovah taketh shall present itself by households, and the household that Jehovah taketh shall present itself man by man. And it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt in the fire,—he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed Jehovah's covenant, and because he hath wrought vileness in Israel.

[q] Num. 32. 1. *ctr.* Num. 14. 6–8.

[r] Deut. 32. 27. Ezek. 36. 21–23.

[s] ch. 22. 18. *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 36–46.

[t] ch. 6. 18.

There is really no mystery about it. What has happened can have but one solution of it. Israel has sinned. All shadows that have darkened the world find their explanation in a similar manner. Own it, and the cloud begins to clear. "The humble He guides in judgment; the humble He teaches His way." "What wilt Thou do for Thy great name?" asks Joshua. The answer is simple: God is caring for it in the very thing which now perplexes the soul of the inquirer. What poor reasoners are we, when we do not begin with God! That He will care for His name is an axiom for faith, and needs no demonstration. How shall we prove that every event has a cause? The thing is plain: the difficulty is created by trying to prove it. Suggest the doubt, and reason itself is useless, except to recall faith to its vacated post.

Doubt it not: God will care for His great name. Let no man labor to get Him out of a strait which never existed; which, if it existed, all creature resources would be too little for. Let us despair indeed, if God cannot uphold the honor of His name! Nor will He give up His people: just on this account will He chasten them. Had they not chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then they would be bastards and not sons.

But all must learn this where the Psalmist did, in the sanctuary, And there it is we learn to kiss as well as to know the rod. "So foolish," he says, "was I, and ignorant; I was even as a beast before Thee. Nevertheless"—spite of all my doubts—"I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me with Thy right hand." (Ps. lxxiii.)

*d* (16-23.) The test applied.

(*d*) And Joshua arose [u]early in the morning, and caused Israel to present themselves by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken. And he made the families of Judah present themselves, and he took the family of the Zarhites. And he caused the family of the Zarhites to present themselves man by man; and Zabdi was taken. And he caused his household to present themselves man by man; and [v]Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to Jehovah the God of Israel, and make confession unto him; tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, [w]Of a truth have I sinned against Jehovah, the God of Israel, and thus it is I have done. I saw among the spoil a beautiful Shinar mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a tongue of gold of fifty shekels weight; and I [x]coveted them; and I took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. And Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them to Joshua, and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before Jehovah.

*e* (24-26.) The judgment.

(*e*) And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the mantle, and the tongue of gold, and his [y]sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them up unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, How hast thou

[u] ch. 6. 15. ch. 8. 10. 1 Sam. 14. 41. *cf.* Deut. 21. 2.

[v] Num. 32. 23. *cfr.* 1 Cor. 11. 27-32.

[w] *cf.* Matt. 27. 3, 4. 2 Cor. 7. 10.

[x] Ex. 20. 17. Gen. 3. 6. Col. 3. 5. Jas. 1. 14, 15.

[y] Num. 16. 27. ch. 22. 20.

(*d*) Israel has sinned: but who is the actual offender? To discover this they are made to present themselves by tribes, by families, by individuals, the lot being cast and unfailingly determining all. This slow approach toward conviction, when it might rather have been expected that the sinner would have been at once named by Him under whose eye he was, seems perfectly suited to exercise the consciences of all, and to lead the guilty one to anticipate conviction by a free confession. But it comes all too late, pressed out at last, when concealment can no longer avail any thing. Then he owns: "I saw, I coveted, I took:" the old, ever-repeating story of sin, in which heredity clearly manifests itself, kleptomania from our first mother; but there is no justification on this account.

It was on the new earth, risen out of the flood of Noah's day, that Babylon was first developed. Here among Israel, on typical resurrection-ground, we find connected with this first sin, a "mantle of Shinar." With this, too, silver and gold are not difficult to associate, standing here, of course, just for what they represent to those who lust for them. Shinar is not indeed precisely Babylon, though more in name than in reality separate. It was the plain in which the city stood, in the same relation to it as Lot's coveted "plain of Jordan" to Sodom, into which he gravitated from it.

(*e*) Judgment follows the discovery of Achan's sin; and it is plain that his family suffer with him. As the law forbad the putting to death of children for their father's sins, we are shut up to the conclusion that they were involved with him in the guilt of what he had done, as the burial of the stolen things in the

troubled us! Jehovah troubleth thee this day. And all Israel [z]stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones, [which is there] to this day. And Jehovah turned from the fierceness of his anger: wherefore the name of that place is called, The valley of [a]Achor, unto this day.

[z] Lev. 24.14, 23. *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 9–13.

[a] Hos. 2. 15. Is. 65. 10. Is. 1. 27.

2.(viii.1-29.) Conflict, & Jehovah's help.

[2] And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [b]Fear not, nor be dismayed: take with thee [c]all the people of war, and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land; and thou shalt do unto Ai and her king as thou didst unto [d]Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof and the cattle thereof shall ye take for a [e]prey unto yourselves: set thee an [f]ambush for the city behind it. And Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai. And Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor, and sent them away by night. And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city: be not very far from the city, and be all of you ready; and I and all the people with me will draw near to the city; and it shall be when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them. And they will come out after us till we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, They flee before us as at the first: therefore will we flee before them. And ye shall rise up from the ambush, and take possession of the city; for Jehovah your God giveth it up into your hand. And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the word of Jehovah shall ye do: see, I have commanded you.

[b] ch. 1. 6.

[c] *cf.* ch. 7. 3.

[d] ch. 6. 24.

[e] Num. 31. 12.

[f] Jud. 20.29. ver.4,7,etc. 2Chron.20. 22. 2 Sam. 12. 1-9. *cf.* 2Cor.12. 16. 1Thess.2.5.

And Joshua sent them forth, and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, westward of Ai; and Joshua lodged that night among the people. And Joshua rose up [g]early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up,—he and the elders of Israel, before the people, to Ai. And all the people of war that were with him went up, and drew near, and came before the city: and they encamped on the north of Ai, and there was a ravine between them and Ai.

[g] ch. 7. 16. 1 Sam.9.26.

midst of his tent would otherwise make probable. It would seem out of place to infer, as some have done, mob violence in a solemn judgment executed in the presence of Joshua and all Israel.

(ii.) And now what hindered God's power acting for them being removed, Joshua is encouraged to go up again against Ai. But their former presumption still needs rebuke; and thus they are made to labor in the capture of the city, spite of its littleness. All the people take part in it. An ambush is placed behind the city, and they are made to feign that they are fleeing as they fled before. All this is clearly humiliation for their pride. How much in that which is work that we do for God has to conform itself to the need there is in us! God shapes His instruments, even while He works with them.

And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west of the city. And when they had set the people, the whole camp, on the north of the city, and their ambush on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

And it was so, when the king of Ai saw it, that the men of the city hasted, and rose up early, and went out against Israel to battle,—he and all his people, to the appointed place, before the plain: and he knew not that there was an ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled the way of the wilderness. And all the people that were in the city were called together to pursue after them; and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. And there was not a man left in Ai or in Bethel that went not out after Israel. And they left the city open and pursued after Israel.

And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [h] Stretch out the javelin that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thy hand: and Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. And the ambush rose up quickly out of their place, and they ran, as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and entered into the city, and took it; and they hasted, and set the city on fire. And the men of Ai turned, and saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city rose up to heaven; and they had no power to flee this way or that; and the people that were fleeing to the wilderness turned upon the pursuers. And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and the smoke of the city rising up, they turned back and slew the men of Ai. And the others came out of the city against them; and they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side; and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. And the [i] king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

[h] Ex. 14. 27, 28.

[i] *ctr.* 1 Sam. 15. 8.

And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they had pursued them, and they were all fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all Israel returned to Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. And so it was that all that fell that day, men as well as women, were twelve thousand,—all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not back his hand wherewith he stretched out the javelin until

Ai is taken, however, and destroyed, her king hung upon a tree, and then taken down, and a heap raised over him, as before with Achan. They had been indeed partners in evil; and Achan a worse trouble than the king of Ai could have been. Evil indulged among the people of God is the ally of the foe without, and the only true hindrance to continuous progress.

he had destroyed under the ban all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of Jehovah which he had commanded Joshua. And Joshua burned Ai, and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. And the king of Ai he [j]hanged upon a tree until the evening; and at the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took down his carcass from the tree, and cast it down at the entrance of the city, and raised over it a great heap of stones, [there] to this day.

j Deut. 21. 22, 23. 2 Sam. 21. 9. Gal. 3. 13. Jno. 19. 31.

3. (*vv.* 30-35.) The seal of the covenant set upon the land.

[3] Then Joshua built an [k]altar unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded the children of Israel, as it was written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones upon which [l]no iron had been lifted up; and they offered on it burnt-offerings to Jehovah, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side and on that side of the ark before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of Jehovah's covenant, the stranger as well as the home-born, half of them toward Mount Gerizim and half of them toward Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded to bless the people of Israel, at the beginning. And afterward he [m]read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, and the women and the little ones, and the strangers that went about among them.

k Deut. 27. 11-14. Deut. 28.

l Ex. 20. 25. *cf.* Rom. 4. 4, 5.

m *cf.* Neh. 8. 2-18.

(IX.)

The Gibeonites and the victory of guile.

6. And it was so, when all the [n]kings heard [it] that were on this side Jordan, in the hill-country, and in the lowland, and on all the shore of the great sea, over against Lebanon,—the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. And the

n ch. 10. 1-5. *cf.* Ps. 83. 1-8.

(iii.) And now the seal of their covenant with Jehovah is set upon the land, according to Moses' commandment, an altar of whole stones being reared upon Mount Ebal, along with other great stones plastered, upon which the law was written. (Comp. Deut. xxvii.) The blessings were then read from Gerizim, the curses from Ebal. Thus the whole land was declared to be under the authority of the law, and sanctified to Jehovah.

6. Hardly, however, is this accomplished before we are called again to see the incompetence of the hands which have just graven the law upon the stones of Ebal. The "wiles of the devil" are in Ephesians that against which we are especially called to "stand." Canaanitish wiles we find here prevailing against the people of God; and once more the secret of failure is the lack of seeking guidance from God.

inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai; and they also did, in [o]subtlety, and went and made themselves [p]ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-skins, old and rent and bound up, and [q]old shoes and patched upon their feet, and old clothes upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry, it had become mouldy. And they went to Joshua, unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, From a far country are we come; and now make a [r]covenant with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Perhaps ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a covenant with you? And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country are thy servants come, because of the name of Jehovah thy God; for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan,—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. And our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, spake unto us, saying, Take provision in your hand for the way, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: make, therefore, a covenant with us. This [s]bread of ours we took hot for our provision out of our houses the day we came forth to meet you; and now, behold, it is dry, and is become mouldy. And these wine-skins which

o *ctr.* ch. 8. 2. *cf.* Eph. 6. 11. 2 Cor. 2. 11.

p *cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13–15.

q *ctr.* Deut. 8. 4. Neh. 9. 21.

r Deut. 7. 2. Deut. 20. 15.

s Ex. 16. 14–36.

How hard it is to learn aright the lesson of dependence upon God! And our own wisdom, how continually does it deceive us! It is the last thing perhaps to which we apply the cross. Yet it is plain that Satan, with his thousands of years of acquired knowledge, will have immeasurable advantage over us, except as revelation is adhered to, and the Spirit of God gives us ability to use the point and edge of the Word. For "the sword of the Spirit" is not the "*Word* of God" exactly, but rather "the *saying* of God." (Eph. vi. 17, *Gk.*) We must have, not the book merely, but the text: and thus even the Lord, as a perfect example for us, met Satan in the wilderness.

The Gibeonites are able to talk piously. They have a certain kind of faith grounded on Jehovah's miracles, and concede to the people of God their title to the land. They are friends, not foes, and seek alliance. They have come a long way (if they are to be believed) to seek it, have endured privations, and brought themselves to destitution. The evidences of this are not indeed infallible, but their profession is without a flaw, and charity would accept it. This the Israelites do: Joshua and the princes swear to them in Jehovah's name, and in three days find that they are dwellers in the land and Canaanites.

Gained by deceit, must this covenant stand? Yes, it must: for had Israel been with God, no deceit could have prevailed against them. And thus there are yokes which, though unequal, we cannot escape from. If we may without injustice to another, then indeed we are bound to do so; as a matter of course, if the work for which we have yoked ourselves is itself evil. If I have married an unbeliever, the oath of the Lord forbids withdrawal from it; and there may be in like manner business relations, from which, after having contracted them, simple righteousness would forbid us to withdraw. But the spiritual yoke, the yoking of believer and unbeliever in the things of the Lord, is what the words

we filled were new, and, behold, they are rent; and these our garments and our shoes have become old by reason of the great length of the journey. And the men [t]took of their victuals, and did not inquire at the mouth of Jehovah. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the princes of the assembly sware unto them.

And it came to pass, at the end of [u]three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and dwelling in their midst. And the children of Israel journeyed and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their [v]cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kirjath-Jearim. And the children of Israel [w]smote them not, because the princes of the assembly had sworn to them by Jehovah the God of Israel; and all the assembly murmured against the princes. And all the princes said unto all the assembly, We have sworn unto them by Jehovah the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. This will we do unto them, and let them live, lest wrath be on us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. And the princes said unto them, Let them live; and let them be [x]hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the assembly: as the princes had spoken unto them. And Joshua called them, and spake unto them, saying, Why have ye deceived us, saying, We are very far off from you, when ye were dwelling among us? And now ye are [y]cursed, and ye shall never cease to be bondmen, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants how that Jehovah thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; and we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. And now, behold, we are in thy hand; as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do. And he did so unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. And Joshua made them that

t Ex. 34. 12. Num. 27. 21. *cfr.* 1 Sam. 23. 10, 11. Prov. 3. 6, 7.

u *cf.* Gen. 40. 12, 13, 18–22.

v ch. 18. 25–28.

w 2 Sam. 21. 1–6. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.

x Jud. 1. 28, 30, 33.

y Gen. 9. 25.

of the apostle in the fullest way apply to (2 Cor. vi. 14–18): "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Had the Gibeonites come openly as what they were, to subject themselves to Jehovah's yoke, they in whose camp Rahab was, with her whole family, could not have refused it; but they came in craft, and though they may not be slain,

day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the assembly, and for the altar of Jehovah, unto this day, in the place that he should choose.

Complete possession.

1. (x-xi. 15.) The power of God.

(X.—XII.)

7. [1](*a*) And it was so, when [z]Adonizedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it,—as he had done to Jericho and her king,

*a* (*vv.* 1-6.) A confederacy.

*z ctr.* Gen. 14. 18.

are subjected as bondmen to the service of the people of God, as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the sanctuary. So perforce must it be, thank God, that all must serve the glorious Lord we own: willingly or unwillingly, as free or bond, this is the only choice permitted: but how momentous are the issues of that choice!

7. Needful as are the lessons as to failure, the history as a whole is here full of abundant encouragement; and the last part of the first division, upon which we now enter shows us the complete subjugation of the land under Israel's feet. The power of their enemies is prostrated, although it is true that at the end of it we still find that there is very much land to be possessed,—much even that in fact they never do possess. But the work that needs the combined power of all the tribes is accomplished. The rest is left to individual energy, such as is so strikingly illustrated for us in the case of Caleb. What he achieved might have been achieved by all the rest: the thing needed for it was simply what his name and his history expressed,—"whole-heartedness." It was this which, as we are told, preserved in him to eighty-five the strength of forty, and to see dispossessed before him the giant owners of the land he had explored. It was of God that there should be such testing, though the result might be to make the failure sorrowfully apparent, a failure only briefly indicated in the present book, while Judges treats of it from end to end.

(i.) The first section alone gives the history, the second simply summing up the general results. In the history the principal lesson is evident, that their power was wholly of God, who demonstrates it by what has seemed to many even disproportionate miracles; but who can measure the magnitude of the necessity of what indeed *ought* to appear to us so simple a lesson! It is the first and foundation one for the Ephesian conflict which we are tracing in type here,—to "be strong in the *Lord*, and in the power of *His* might." The grace of it in the illustration is seen in its coming after the sin of Achan and the failure as to the Gibeonites. Yet does it display itself unweakened,—never more gloriously divine. This is the power which has acted for us to make the land our own, and which is ready to act *in* us, if there be but faith in it. We need it as much as they did, for our warfare is "not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and with powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." Yet of the meaning of this conflict even how many are not aware, who know it, as all must, but perceive not the object aimed at, to keep us out of the realization of our inheritance. Here we must remember the condition, "Every place that the *sole of your feet shall tread on* shall be your own." This is the need we have of an activity of faith which will call up to resist us all the power of Satan, and will make us prove the need we have of the "whole armor of God."

(*a*) The enemies seldom appear single: they are a mighty confederacy, leagued together by a common hatred to God and to His people. Canaan swarms with kings, which, independent of each other and often at strife, make peace and common cause against the "hosts of the Lord." So the jarring forces of evil are compacted together by the presence of that which is of God; and the first king of this company startles us with his evident apostasy: Adonizedek, "lord of righteousness," king of Jerusalem, "the foundation of peace," the awful mockery and antagonist to "that Melchizedek, King of Righteousness, King of Salem, that is, 'peace,' Priest of the Most High God, who met" Israel's forefather, "Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and *blessed*

so had he done to Ai and to her king,—and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them, that they [a]feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. And Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of [b]Hebron, and to Piream king of Jarmuth, and

[a] ch. 9. 24.

[b] ver. 36.

him." In what striking contradiction, made so evil by the resemblance, is this man and his attitude, an Antichrist (one might well say) to the true Melchizedek, the Christ of God! Not that we are to suppose any special Antichrist here, which would seem unsuited, but rather that primitive type which is found in Satan, the adversary, wherever Satan is found, enmity working in disguise and by imitation, "as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses." He is "lord of righteousness," as where on the ground of it, coming among the sons of God, he pleads against Job. And he is not "king of *peace*," as Christ is, but only of the "*foundation* of peace,"—which is righteousness again. (Is. xxxii. 17.) He can plead righteousness, but only *against*, not for men; therefore "priest of the Most High God" he is not: he is no saviour; readily discovered by this fact. His darts are "fiery darts," flaming with wrath, and putting distance between the soul and God, while Christ's voice, even in the discovery of sin, wins *to* God; *He* does not accuse, but is a refuge from the accuser. Therefore with the "shield of faith" shall we "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

The next named to Adonizedek in the confederacy which he heads is Hoham king of Hebron, a city which we already know in connection with Abraham's history, and by that most interesting note upon it upon occasion of the visit of the spies. Hebron, which according to its derivation speaks of companionship, stands throughout as the symbol of "communion." But we have heard of it as in the hands of the Anakim, and even in Genesis as the city of Arba, the father of them all. The Anakim are the "long-necked," giants in stature, and children of pride, of whom the vain-glorious boast is uttered, "Who can stand before the children of Anak?" (Deut. ix. 2.) "Arba" is supposed by Fuerst to mean "hero of Baal," and this is accepted by many; but it seems too purely conjectural; while the word is common Hebrew for the numeral four, which has more easily the significance of "square, four-square," suited to the father of a giant race. That the number four is that also of the creature, and of weakness, is in no wise against this, but a divine comment on the other side. It is upon what is loftiest in nature that God puts the mark of nothingness and abases it.

Hebron is thus dedicated to man worship, the utter destruction of its true character; and the Hoham here is king but of the Anakite Hebron, where the enemy has massed his strongest force to keep out of it its divinely appointed possessors. The meaning of "Hoham" is variously given, but the last syllable has the same root idea with our similarly formed "hum," the confusion of sound as in the noise of a multitude, and from which it is transferred to the multitude itself. The first syllable seems most naturally to be abbreviated from *hovah*, another form of *havvah*, which speaks of "a sinking of the mind into a corrupt, depraved state, into a gulf of lusts and insatiable desire." (*Wilson.*) These two thoughts are certainly completely opposed to that of Hebron, most suitable therefore, to its Anakite usurpation. Hebron figures largely in the report of the spies,—largely again in the conquest of the land,—and we might expect its Canaanite king to figure in the resistance to its conquerors. Certainly we may expect that Satan will keep us off if possible from that communion with God in an enjoyed heavenly portion which Hebron represents to us; and that in no way could he better succeed than by stirring up in us that tumult of desires which are veritable sons of Anak, only to be subdued by such a spirit of "wholeheartedness" for God as was found in Caleb.

The third of these confederates is Piream king of Jarmuth; and as to neither

to Japhia king of [c]Lachish, and to Debir king of [d]Eglon, saying, Come up to me, and help me, and let us smite Gibeon, because it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. And they gathered together and went up, five kings of the Amorites—the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon,—they and all their hosts, and encamped against Gibeon, and made war upon it. And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua, to the camp, to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from

[c] ver. 31.
[d] ver. 34.

of these names does there seem much dispute. Jarmuth signifies elevation; Piream is from *pere*, the wild ass. The latter is what man is born as (Job xi. 12), and it is his obstacle to finding wisdom. Free and independent, he brooks no yoke nor restraining hand. Nebuchadnezzar, forgetting in the pride of his heart Him who had raised him up, "was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was make like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses" (Dan. v. 21),—he was made to take his place with those which his moral state resembled. This may throw light upon the connection of the two names here, —the wild-ass king and his city of "elevation." Thus, "man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." (Ps. xlix. 12.) He who can abide is the one who recognizes and is subject to the hand that raised him. How completely does the glorious place that God has given us declare that such exaltation is of His grace alone! how simply, then, as owing all to His love should we act as in that place!

Japhia king of Lachish is the fourth confederate. Lachish is again a difficult word. Gesenius from the Arabic gathers the meaning "obstinate," as referring to its impregnability to assault. Young makes it similar to Jarmuth—"height;" but he has at least twelve other names of Israelitish cities translated in the same way: we may well suppose there is some difference of meaning among so many different words. In Hebrew we can only find a meaning, as it would seem, by dividing it. Lach-ish may then mean "walk (as) men." In fact Lachish stood longer than most cities of the land against Joshua, though not long; for it was taken the second day.

Japhia corresponds with his city: his name means "shining, resplendent." In the world at large the manly virtues are thus lustrous; but there is manifest danger when shining qualities are prized as such. When lustre is king then the king is surely Canaanite. Lachish comes thus into the confederacy against Joshua, and is not the least among the enemies of Israel. A world of show and splendor is such "darkness" for the people of God as the "principalities and powers" which are "rulers of" it love to work with. *Dazzle* is easily read as darkness: and alas! the children of God can both be dazzled, and love to dazzle. Eyes that see the glory of God are alone strong enough to meet the resplendent king of Lachish.

So far, then, we can realize meaning in these confederate kings. It will be seen too that they answer exactly to the numerical significance of their order, which is a test one could hardly have insisted on perhaps in this case. That they should so answer may encourage us to a closer and more complete application of the symbolism of numbers, which ought thus to be proportionately more fruitful. When we come now to the fifth of these confederate powers we shall need to avail ourselves of it, as we shall find here a deeper mystery facing us,—and even this is accordant with the numerical place.

The names, happily, are here simple. God has planted stepping stones firmly for us to prevent slipping, according to His constant mercy. First, "Eglon" is "round" or "circular," its root-meaning showing applicability either to form or motion. Thus the derivatives from it are words such as *agil*, "ring;" *agalah*, "chariot," "cart,"—which, as moving on its circular, revolving wheels, com-

thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the hill-country are gathered together against us.

b (7-11.) The Conflict.

(*b*) So Joshua went up from Gilgal,—he and all the people of war with him, even all the men of valor. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, [c]Fear them not, for I have

c ch. 8. 1.

bines form and motion; and from this, *maagalah*, the roadway for these wheels; *galgal* is the ordinary word for wheel, nearly identical with the *Gilgal* we have met before; *gal* is billow, wave; and so on.

How are we to take it here? The town very likely was circular, and it may have derived its name from this; but as in the wheel form implies motion, so may it be spiritually in this case. Indeed, the wheel itself is found in the visions of Ezekiel as that of the chariot of Deity, a prominent symbol in connection with the divine government. Five, the number attaching here to Eglon, *is*, let us now remember, the symbol of God's governmental ways!

In the book of Ecclesiastes we find the wheel in motion, but that it is the wheel of God's triumphal chariot is not seen. On the contrary, "vanity of vanities" is inscribed upon it; and that God has ordained the wheel is the cause of infinite perplexity. "One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place whence he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north: it whirleth about continually: and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. . . . The thing that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is nothing new under the sun."

Thus "to every thing there is a season," and a season only; but the generations pass, and do not return: if they do, experience, at least, knows nothing about it; and thus the bat's wing of death throws its sombre and sinister shadow over every thing: beyond, "who knoweth?" Here God, who is light, can alone give light; and revelation is our one source of certainty. Then, indeed, still the wheel turns; but the wheel of destiny becomes the chariot-wheel of God, as in Ezekiel.

Now there is purpose in it,—a double purpose: man is abased, God glorified. Man needs abasement, and divine goodness has ordained it; otherwise that would be fulfilled which the psalmist declares, "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." (Ps. lv. 19.) But for man, too, there is a resurrection, not within the cycle of change, but beyond it; and "he that humbleth himself" to accept God's lesson, turning to Him thus, "shall be exalted."

Eglon speaks, I doubt not, of this wheel of destiny, which by its mystery exercises so man's heart, and which, while it has its good, and is meant for good, can yet bring out the rebellion that is in it, and urge man also to all kinds of secret arts to discover the mystery. From the heathen oracle of old to the Spiritism and theosophy of modern times Satan has used this craving of man to enthral him in the bonds of superstition and slavish dread, or to lure him by the fascination of unearthly spectacles. Thus Debir is the true king of Eglon: for "Debir" on the one hand may mean "speaker," while on the other it is the word used for "oracle" of the temple, out of which the voice of God was to be heard. Here indeed Debir has no evil sense. God *has* responded to the need of man in view of the mystery of existence, as we know; but there are Canaanite "debirs," and satanic mockeries of the divine answer. And thus we find the fifth confederate against Israel in the scene before us.

(*b*) It is not indeed directly against Israel that they gather, but against Gibeon which has made peace with Israel. Satan often, as it were, sidles up to the attack. Gibeon, false all round, may well provoke the onslaught of the

given them into thy hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. And Joshua came upon them suddenly: he went up from Gilgal all the night. And Jehovah discomfited them before Israel; and he smote them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them the way of the ascent of Beth-horon, and smote them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it was so, as they fled from before Israel, (they were at the descent of Beth-horon,) that Jehovah cast down on them great [f]stones from heaven as far as Azekah, and they died: more died of the hailstones than the children of Israel slew with the sword.

[f] Ex. 9. 22-25.

c (12-15.) Signs in the heavens.

(*c*) Then spake Joshua to Jehovah, in the day that Jehovah gave up the Amorite before the children of Israel, and said in the sight of Israel, Sun, [g]stand thou still over Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon! And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the nation had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jashar?

[g] Jud. 5. 20. Hab. 3. 11. ch. 19. 42.

"lord of righteousness;" but Joshua, remembering the oath of the Lord, comes up against the Canaanite host with haste, and smites them with a great slaughter, pursuing them the way of Beth-horon (the "place of wrath"), as far as Azekah ("fencing round") and Makkedah ("bowing the head"). Thus God puts to defeat His enemies, and they are as cattle in the hands of the slaughterer. Beth-horon proves its title by the fall there of a great hail from heaven, slaying more than the swords of the Israelites.

(*c*) And here occurs the notable miracle which has awakened so much discussion and provoked so much the scorn of unbelief. The language of Scripture being so purely phenomenal every where,—dealing with things as they appear to us, rather than with the scientific explanation,—I see no reason for any actual stoppage of the sun and moon, which must in that case be rather of the earth's own revolution, and so not *literally* according to the description after all. The economy of miracle which the Bible shows to one who attentively considers it, notwithstanding the large actual amount, would suggest that, for the purpose Joshua desires to have accomplished, the extreme supposition need hardly be the fact. For him and for all beholders the sun and moon did actually stop, and that is all that the words fairly taken imply; and the miracle is mighty enough, if it were accomplished by means of refraction or mirage or what not: it is not worth the labor to speculate upon how it might be done. Whatever the means that might be used, the day stands alone in the world's history,—surely miracle enough. And there is no tampering with the record involved in this, no trifling with revelation, no giving way in the least to the infidelity of the day. It is *to us* the sun rises or sets, as to *them* it stood still in the heavens: why should language be pressed in the one case in a way which would be admitted to be straining it in the other?*

The spiritual lesson more concerns us here, and this seems to be the manifestation of divine power as acting for Israel. Sun and moon were both worshiped in many forms by the nations around them, Baal and Ashtoreth standing for

*The author of "Joshua's Long Day" believes, however, that he has demonstrated by the double aid of astronomy and chronology, the occurrence of the miracle in the full extent which many give it. But this involves a chronology from the creation of man exact to the very hour; a precision it can hardly be hoped even ever to attain. According to his view also the moon could not have been visible in the position indicated, and Joshua must have addressed what was to all observers but a blank spot in the heavens! This, although Joshua spake, it is said, "in the *sight* of Israel,"—evidently implying that the objects of his address were before their eyes.

And the sun stood in the midst of the heavens, and hasted not to go down about a full day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, in which Jehovah hearkened to the voice of a man; for Jehovah [h] fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp, to [i] Gilgal.

*d* (16–21.) The enemy prostrate.

(*d*) And those five kings fled, and hid themselves in the [j] cave at Makkedah. And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in the cave at Makkedah. And Joshua said, Roll great stones unto the mouth of the cave; and set men by it, to keep them; and ye, stay not, pursue after your enemies, and cut off their rear; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for Jehovah your God hath given them into your hand. And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of smiting them with a very great slaughter till they were consumed, and the remnant of them that remained had entered into fortified cities, that all the people returned unto the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace: none moved his [k] tongue against the children of Israel.

*e* (22–27.) Retribution.

(*e*) And Joshua said, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring forth to me those five kings out of the cave. And they did so, and brought forth unto him those five kings out of the cave—the king of Jerusalem, the king

[h] Ex. 14. 14.

[i] ch. 10. 43. ver. 7. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 7–10.

[j] *cf.* Jud. 6. 2.

[k] Ex. 11. 7. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.

them respectively among the Canaanite population. Hence Israel's God was proclaimed here to be "God of gods." The very deities of Canaan lengthened the day to accomplish their destruction! as indeed they had in every generation been the destruction of their worshipers. But Israel warred not in their own strength, and it was not their right hand saved them. If they or their enemies imagined this, the significance of their victories was wholly lost and turned to the glorification of man. Hebron could never in this way have been redeemed from the Anakim, but would have been Kirjath-arba still. Lachish would have kept its resplendent Japhia; and Eglon's wheel have revolved but to grind out "vanity of vanities." So important is it that Israel's victories should be seen not as their own but God's!

But then how wonderful to be leagued with supreme and omnipotent power! Should not sun and moon standing still impress this upon us? How can it be sufficiently emphasized for us that it is really Jehovah who fights for Israel? All this magnificent blazonry upon the face of the heavens to convey to us what appears perhaps so simple a truth! The need, then, of the lesson must be great indeed, and hard it must be to raise to its proper height the enthusiasm of the Lord's host for the banner they fight under! a banner not to be dishonored by cowardice or half-heartedness or fleshly confidence. The quotation from the book of Jashar fittingly therefore is a song; and the appeal is to the joyful experience of the "upright" (Jashar). Songs like these are easily remembered: the heart retains what it has welcomed in this way.

(*d*) We have to see that the victory that the Lord has gained is followed up, and that the foe is not merely in retreat, but in rout. Many a victory has been lost by slackness of pursuit. The enemy must be pursued to his stronghold; and after all may escape.

(*e*) But the kings are in the caves of Makkedah. Now they are brought forth and judgment executed upon them. Our spiritual foes cannot indeed be slain as yet; and this is but the anticipation of faith: a picture such as we have seen

of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon. And it was so, when they brought forth those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called all the men of Israel, and said unto the chiefs of the men of war that went with him, Draw near, [and] put your feet upon the [l]necks of these kings; and they drew near, and put their feet upon their necks. And Joshua said unto them, [m]Fear not, nor be dismayed; be strong, and of good courage; for thus will Jehovah do unto all your enemies against whom ye fight. And afterward Joshua smote them and put them to death, and hanged them upon five trees; and they were hanging upon the trees [n]until the evening. And it came to pass that at the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from off the trees, and cast them into the cave where they had been hid, and placed great stones at the mouth of the cave, [there] unto this very day.

*l* 2 Sam. 22. 41.

*m* ch. 1. 18. ch. 23. 6.

*n* ch. 8. 29.

*f* (28–43.) Conquests.

(*f*) And Joshua took [o]Makkedah on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and its king: he executed the ban upon them, even all the souls that were therein: he left no remnant; and he did unto the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

*o* ver. 18. ch. 15. 4.

in the case of Jericho. Faith can pass its judgment upon them, foreseeing the divine one that shall be: branding them thus with their infamy.

It is a great thing to know enough to call Satan Satan; and to meet him with the assurance of with whom we are contending; to draw him forth from the darkness of the cave in which he may have taken refuge, and, in the light of day, convict and put him under the doom that awaits him.

(*f*) And now the strongholds yield, one by one. Six cities are marked especially here, exactly in the midst of which we find the attack and destruction of the king of Gezer. The series in this way becomes a septenary one, and the first four a 3+1, after the usual manner: three cities taken and one army destroyed. By such slight yet sufficient indications is the structure of a part made known to us.

The cities taken are not to be looked at simply as strongholds of the enemy. They belong by the gift of God to Israel, and many of them figure afterward in Israel's history: hence what they signify for us is of the more importance. Their meanings too will be essentially good, as we see in Hebron, which is called by this name continually, although to the Canaanites it was Kirjath-arba. Indeed, in general, the Canaanite possessors are of little account, except as hindrance to the true heirs, and their names even in most cases are not recorded. Nor are there here details given of the assault, nor any account save of the extirpation of the inhabitants. The names of the acquired cities seem to be alone significant.

The first is Makkedah, "bowing the head." It is the place where we have seen the five kings were forced to bow those proud Amorite heads which only divine power could humble. As an Israelite habitation it has a better significance, and as its place in this series may denote, the thing itself is a choice blessing and leading to many others. How good when the stiff neck first gives way, and man the rebel is subdued to allegiance! when God becomes God indeed, and man too, as he abases himself, rises from the level of the beast to real manhood. The use of the word is in connection with homage—the owning of a superior, though not always God. And Canaan, which sets forth the highest—heavenly—

And Joshua passed, and all Israel with him, from Makkedah to [p]Libnah, and fought against Libnah; and Jehovah gave it also and its king into the hand of Israel, and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein; he left no remnant in it: and did unto its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

[p] ch. 15. 42. ch. 21. 13.

And Joshua passed, and all Israel with him, from Libnah unto [q]Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it; and Jehovah gave Lachish into Israel's hand, and he took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah. Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, till he left him not a remnant.

[q] ch. 10. 3. ch. 15. 39.

blessing, is just the place where we should find this acknowledgment constant and complete. Nearness to God produces of necessity, and may be measured by, the filial fear of Him and submission to Him. In Ephesians it is that God's will is emphasized in the strongest way.

The second city is Libnah, "whiteness:" which, read spiritually, and in connection with its numerical place, we may take as "separation from evil." Its following subjection to God guards it from pharisaism, and defines it according to the Word, a measure of evil much less observed among the people of God than is supposed; simple morality or popular conscience governing everywhere the mass. In their associations for benevolent, moral, and even religious purposes, how many permit themselves the greatest license that can be imagined, and on public platforms the friends and the enemies of Christ are found commonly together. Nay, as in Masonic lodges, for instance, they can even exclude Christ, that "good" fellowship may not be hindered. Libnah has, in fact, few citizens in the Israel of to-day.

The third city is Lachish, which we have seen under its Canaanitish king already, but which we have now to see as a possession of Israel. In this sense, and in its numerical place here, the spiritual application is easy. The number is that of resurrection; it is a city of the land beyond Jordan, the heavenly country: how else, then, can this "walk as men," which is the meaning of "Lachish," read but as "walk as in the risen Man,—not as of the world, but as heavenly, as Christ is"?

Thus the three cities here connect naturally in meaning, and at the same time fill their numerical place, while they develop in fullness and positiveness as they go on. But in the fourth place in this series, as usual under that number, we find what is not in the order of progression hitherto, but distinct and peculiar. Horam king of Gezer comes up to assist Lachish, and is smitten,—he and his people; but there is no taking of his city at this time. In fact, the Canaanites were not really expelled from it till Solomon's reign, and by that the city seems to have lapsed into separation from Israel. For it is Pharaoh king of Egypt who takes it then, and gives it to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

"Gezer" means a place "isolated," or "cut off." "Horam," according to its apparent derivation, most literally would mean "tumid, swollen." May not this speak of the pride of man's nature, which, maintaining itself in independence, refuses the judgment of the first Adam, even though it be for exaltation in the Second? Certainly this is no fictitious antagonist of Joshua, or of Israel in our day at least, and Lachish, the "walk as men," is still hotly contended for in behalf of the Canaanites, ignoring God's true Man, in whom all believers have a common place.

And Joshua passed, and all Israel with him, from Lachish to [r]Eglon; and they encamped against it, and fought against it; and they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword; and on all the souls that were therein he executed the ban that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

[r] ver. 3. ch. 15. 39.

And Joshua went up, and all Israel with him, from Eglon unto [s]Hebron, and they fought against it; and they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king of it, and its cities, and all the souls that were therein: he left no remnant, according to all that he had done to Eglon; and he executed the ban on it, and on all the souls that were therein.

[s] ver. 3. ch. 15. 13.

And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to [t]Debir, and fought against it; and he took it, and the king of it, and all its cities; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and executed the ban on all the souls that were therein: he left no remnant; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and to its king, as he had done also to Libnah and to its king.

[t] ch. 12. 13. ch. 15. 7–13.

So Joshua smote all the land, the hill-country, and the [u]south, and the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings; he left not a remnant, but executed the ban upon all that breathed, as Jehovah the God of Israel commanded. And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the land of Goshen even unto Gibeon. And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time; for Jehovah the God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua

[u] ch. 11. 2.

In the allotment of the land, Gezer falls to Ephraim as a Levitical city of the family of Kohath, and in this differs again from the other cities named here, whether before or after, which are given to Judah. The enumeration of them now proceeds, Eglon filling the fifth place, as in the list of the confederate kings. We have seen already of what it speaks to us, and may easily perceive now how it connects with Horam and with Lachish. The wheel of destiny finds its place in the chariot of God's providence when Eglon is subdued by Israel, and the humiliation of man's changes gives us profitable exercise, but is no hopeless, no impenetrable mystery any longer.

Hebron comes next, and with its meaning we are quite familiar; but it fills another place from that we might expect,—the sixth instead of the second; for, as following Eglon, it shows us communion maintained amid all changes, which are but the fruitful discipline which is ordained "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." What is this—to be partakers of His holiness—but to be in practical communion with Himself?

Debir, therefore, ends this series,—the name that before we found attached to the king of Eglon, but which here is that of an Israelitish city: a wonderfully blessed name to end with, speaking as it does of the dwelling with man of Him who, if He be nigh, cannot be mute; whose voice has answered faith's questioning wherever faith has been,—yea, gone before to win men to Himself. How well the numerical place suits here! It is the voice that spake once openly to the winds and seas, and hushed them; and which gives rest still, whatever be the cause of trouble.

These are all the cities specified here, and of course for a special purpose. It is added to this now that Joshua took all the land (connected with these cities)—

returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to [v]Gilgal.

g (xi. 1-15.) The end reached.

(*g*) And it came to pass, when [w]Jabin the king of Hazor heard thereof, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings that were northward in the hill-country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland, and on the upland of Dor seaward, to the Canaanite toward the [sun]rise and toward the sea, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill-country, and to the Hivite beneath Hermon in the land of Mizpah. And they went out,—they and all their hosts with them, a people many as the sand that is on the sea-shore for multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And all these kings met together, and came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Fear them not; for to-morrow about this time will I give them all up slain

v ch. 14. 6. ch. 10. 15.

w Jud. 4. 1. ch. 10. 1.

the southern part of Canaan. "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal."

(*g*) The northern part of the land remained yet unconquered. Excited and alarmed by the ruin that had come upon their kindred tribes, the kings of the north now gather together in a vast confederacy, of which the Spirit of God points out, however, only four, and names but two. Jabin king of Hazor is the leader now, Hazor being the head of all these kingdoms. "Hazor" means "inclosed;" "Jabin," "discerning." The city was strong in its defenses and in the wisdom of its king. The only other king whose name is given is Jobab, the "shouter," whose city is Madon, "contention." There seems no reason to doubt of these meanings. But what, then, do they represent? It would certainly seem that Jabin was the Sihon of this side Jordan,—the human wisdom which would intrude itself into the things of God, always hostile to faith and to God, and which always has its "inclosure" within which it permits neither the one nor the other. There is a charmed circle of science to-day which is thus agnostic, and from which it has made raids upon Scripture in the shape of "higher criticism." This is only illustration; but the rational spirit is one from which in all time—never, perhaps, more than now—Christians have suffered, and by which they have been deprived of much of the good land God has called them to possess. That it allies itself often with the spirit of strife which exalts mere noise rather than reason, is not difficult to see, and may be the meaning of Jobab's place here. Reason alone would soon have to submit to faith as to what is highest reason, if it were not for this. To these the king of Shimron—"keeping," from a word which is the common one used for the keeping of law, adds the thought of a spirit of legality, which readily unites with the reasoning of unbelief; while the king of Achshaph—"sorcery," supplementing the whole, speaks of the deep satanic spell which works with all this to give it a power that after all without it would be unintelligible still. "Who hath bewitched you," the apostle asks of the Galatians, "that ye should not obey the truth?"

These are the leaders; with them is gathered a multitudinous host of other powers less precisely marked, and which we cannot attempt to particularize. They gather at the waters of Merom, "the high place;" and with such enemies are not the highest levels of truth just what they would lay hold upon and deprive us of first of all? For what is highest is for that reason what mere reason can least grasp, and legality least believe our portion, and Satan envy us most.

before Israel; and thou shalt hamstring their horses and burn their [x] chariots in the fire. And Joshua, and all the people of war with him, came upon them at the waters of Merom suddenly, and fell upon them. And Jehovah gave them into Israel's hand; and they smote them, and pursued them as far as great Zidon, and as far as Misrephoth-maim, and as far as the valley of Mizpah toward the sunrise; and they smote them till they left them not a remnant. And Joshua did unto them as Jehovah had said unto him: he hamstrung their horses and burnt their chariots in the fire.

[x] Deut. 11.4. Jud. 1. 19. 2 Kings 23. 11. Ps. 46. 9.

And Joshua returned at that time, and took Hazor, and smote the king of it with the sword; for Hazor was beforetime the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, executing the ban on them: there was none left that breathed; and he burnt Hazor with fire. And all the cities of those kings and all their kings did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, executing the ban on them, [y] as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded. Only all the cities that stood still upon their mounds Israel did not burn, save Hazor, that alone Joshua burnt. And all the spoil of these cities and the cattle the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but all the men they smote with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them; they left none that breathed. As Jehovah had commanded his servant Moses, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua: he let nothing fail of all that Jehovah had commanded Moses.

[y] ch. 1. 7.

But Joshua, with the energy of faith, and specially encouraged by the divine assurance, falls upon them there, and inflicts upon them an overwhelming defeat, Israel pursuing them as far as Zidon and Misrephoth-maim, and east into the Lebanon-valley (?). They hamstring their horses and burn their chariots in the fire; for if "some trust in chariots and some in horses," they are to "remember the name of Jehovah their God." (Ps. xx. 7.)

Joshua then turns back to smite Hazor. "God will in no wise allow the world's seat of power to become that of His people; for His people depend exclusively on Him. The natural consequence of taking Hazor would have been to make it the seat of government, and a centre of influence in the government of God, so that this city should be that for God which it had been for the world; 'for Hazor before-time was the head of all those kingdoms.' But it was just the contrary. Hazor is totally destroyed. God will not leave a vestige of former power: He will make all things new. The centre and source of power must be His,—entirely and conclusively His: a very important lesson for His children, if they would preserve their spiritual integrity." (*Synopsis*, vol. i., p. 370, 371.)

The Word of God governs every thing for Joshua, and all that he does prospers. How needed a lesson, amid the constant temptations to self-will! It is precisely to obtain success that we are urged to adopt all sorts of unscriptural methods. Expediency is the constant plea for latitudinarianism,—a plea than which nothing could be more foolish: as if to depart from God's way would insure His blessing. "As Jehovah commanded His servant Moses, so did Moses command Joshua; and so did Joshua: he let nothing fail of all that Jehovah

2.(xi.16-xii.) The sum of results.

[2] So Joshua took all that land, the hill-country and all the south, and all the land of Goshen, and the lowland, and the Arabah, and the hill-country of Israel, and its lowland, from the [z] smooth mountain that rises toward Seir as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon beneath Mount Hermon; and all their kings he took, and smote them, and put them to death. Joshua made war a long time on all these kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites who dwelt in [a] Gibeon: they took all in battle. For it was of Jehovah, the [b] hardening of their hearts to meet Israel in battle, that the ban might be executed on them, that no favor might be shown them, but that they might be destroyed, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

**And Joshua** came at that time, and cut off the [c] Anakim from the hill-country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the hill-country of Judah, and from all the hill-country of Israel: Joshua executed the ban upon them with their cities. There were none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained. And Joshua took the [d] whole land according to all that Jehovah had spoken unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land [e] rested from war.

And these are the kings of the land which the children of Israel smote, and of whose land they took posses-

z ch. 12. 7.

a ch.9.3,etc.

b Ex. 4. 21. Deut. 2. 30.

c Num. 13. 22. Deut. 9. 2. ch.15.13,14.

d ch. 1. 3. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

e ch. 14. 15. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8 with Phil. 3. 13, 14. Heb.4.8-10.

had commanded Moses." So according to the Word of God does our Joshua lead to-day. May we follow Him!

(ii.) The results are now summed up: the land within its limits for the time, from Mount Halak, the "smooth" or bald mountain bordering Seir upon the south, to Baal-gad, under Mount Hermon, in the north. Not a city except Gibeon that yielded itself to God: all were taken in battle. This was the effect of God's retributive justice, making the hearts firm in resistance to Israel's power that had shut themselves up against the God of Israel. Thus they met the judgment rightly decreed upon them.

The extirpation of the Anakim is specially recorded, and with reference once more to the seats of their power, Hebron and Debir, a connection so important that we are reminded of it again and again. Communion and the living voice of God, all the power of the enemy will be indeed employed to keep us from the realization of these. Both of these cities in Anakite hands, let us remember, had very different significance: they were Kirjath-arba and Kirjath-sepher, the city of man and of books respectively; we are soon to have their capture, by Caleb and Othniel, related to us. Yet the children of Anak are not wholly destroyed: there are some left in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, cities still held by the Philistines; and there we find them at a later time. All this has meaning, not obscure, if we consider who these Philistines are: their history is elsewhere. (Gen. xx., xxvi., *notes.*)

Now the land rests from war.

The enumeration follows of the kings dispossessed and slain on both sides of the river, by Moses and by Joshua.

sion, across Jordan toward the [f]sunrising, from the river Arnon unto Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah toward the [sun]rising:—[g]Sihon king of the Amorites who dwelt at Heshbon, ruling from Aroer which is on the bank of the brook Arnon, and from the middle of the ravine, and over half Gilead, as far as the brook Jabbok, the border of the children of Ammon; and the Arabah, as far as the sea of Chinneroth toward the [sun]rise, and as far as the sea of the Arabah, the salt sea, toward the [sun]rise, the way of Beth-jeshimoth, and southward under the slopes of Pisgah; and the territory of [h]Og king of Bashan, of the remnant of the Rephaim who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, and ruled over Mount Hermon, and over Salcah, and over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and of the Maachathites, and [over] half Gilead, as far as the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. Moses the servant of Jehovah and the children of Israel smote them; and Moses the servant of Jehovah gave it for a possession to the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

And these are the kings of the land which Joshua and the children of Israel smote, on this side Jordan seaward, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon as far as the smooth mountain that rises toward Seir. And Joshua gave it to the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions, in the hill-country, and in the lowland, and in the Arabah, and on the slopes, and in the wilderness, and in the south,—the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:—

The king of [i]Jericho, one; the king of [j]Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; the king of [k]Jerusalem, one; the king of [l]Hebron, one; the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of [m]Lachish, one; the king of [n]Eglon, one; the king of [o]Gezer, one; the king of [p]Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; the king of [q]Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; the king of [r]Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; the king of Madon, one; the king of [s]Hazor, one; the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam on Carmel, one; the king of Dor, in the upland of Dor, one; the king of Goim at Gilgal, one; the king of Tirzah, one: all the kings, thirty and one.

[f] Num. 21.
[g] Deut. 2. 24-37.
[h] Num. 21. 33. Deut. 3. 11.
[i] ch. 6. 2.
[j] ch. 8. 17-29.
[k] ch. 10. 3.
[l] ch. 10. 36, 37.
[m] ch. 10. 31, 32.
[n] ch. 10. 34, 35.
[o] ch. 10. 33. ch. 16. 3.
[p] ch. 10. 38. ch. 15. 7.
[q] ch. 10. 29, 30.
[r] ch. 10. 28.
[s] ch. 11. 10.

## DIVISION 2. (Chap. xiii.–xxiv.)

### *Division of the Land.*

### SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xiii.–xxi.)

#### *The Allotment of Inheritance.*

(XIII. 1-7.)

Command to divide the land, though much is theirs yet only by the divine decree.

1. NOW Joshua was old, advanced in days, and Jehovah said unto him, Thou art old, advanced in days, and there [t]remaineth very much land to possess. This is the land that remaineth: all the circles of the Philistines, and all the Geshurites; from the Sihor which is before Egypt unto the boundary of Ekron northward, shall be counted to the Canaanite; the five princes

[t] ch. 13. 3. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 5-11. Eph. 3. 14-21.

DIV. 2.

THE second division gives the division of the land among the tribes, with a supplementary part, which is a twofold witness and warning as to that which is to come. It involves, of course, a more or less detailed account of the land itself, which, if it be what perhaps all Christian hearts have believed, a type of our own heavenly portion, ought to be of amazing interest to every child of God. If we ask, then, what has been done in this field in all the centuries that they have had it in possession, it has to be answered, almost absolutely nothing! The commentators in general give plenty of verbal criticism, geography, and archæology, but practically declare it, as Fay in Lange does openly, as for the most part, "not suited for texts of sermons." He remarks, therefore, "here, once for all, that on this description of passages in our book, the homiletical and practical comments will be omitted." Yet the American editor complains of certain expositions as "too much inclined to *make gospel* where the revealing Spirit has only seen fit to put something else, perhaps equally good, in its place"! Such remarks, from either side of the ocean, have a sorrowful congruity, and explain each other. No wonder that those should find such parts of Scripture as that which now lies before us barren of practical edification, who decide, by instinct, as it would seem, that the inheritance of Israel's tribes of old can have no gospel in it! Who would commit himself to a search for it, if convinced that this is true? Yet the apostle assures us that things that happened unto Israel "happened unto them for types," and elsewhere that, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." How can we decide *a priori*, then, that there are no types here? or believe that a map to illustrate an ancient history is all that is in the mind of the Spirit in this place? Is it not really presumption to decide so?

We believe it is; and that it is just such unbelieving dogmatism that is helping, Philistinelike, to stop the wells which God would have dug for the refreshment of pilgrims. In this wonderful field of Scripture, whenever we do not find water on the surface, we may be sure it is, at any rate, underneath the surface, and that "every one that" in a right spirit "seeketh findeth." The rule here, if any where, applies, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding,—if thou seekest for her as for silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

SUBD. 1.

THE first subdivision gives the inheritance of the tribes according to lot; the casting of the lot being characteristic of the apportionment on the west side of Jordan, that on the east side, as elsewhere remarked, being without it. By the lot, it is evident, was expressed, in a way more distinct than otherwise, the

of the Philistines,—the Gazathite and the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, and the Ekronite; and the [u] Avvite, in the south: all the land of the Canaanite, and Mearah, which belongeth to the Sidonians, as far as Aphek, as far as the boundary of the Amorite; and

[u] Deut.2.23.

mind of God: "the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord," says the voice of inspiration itself. (Prov. xvi. 33.) But the lot seems to have only determined the position, and not the extent of these possessions, room being left for the revision of boundary-lines according as individual tribes might, as the result of their faithfulness or unfaithfulness, increase or diminish. Had they been as a whole faithful, the enlargement of their territories would have necessarily led to such revision.

1. Meanwhile, Joshua being old, God commands him to distribute the land, although there remained very much land to be possessed, even of that which was but the first installment, as it were, of what had been originally promised. For what is now spoken of reaches neither to the Red Sea nor the Euphrates. (Ex. xxiii. 31.)

What remains is now carefully put before them, that they may be stimulated to the attainment of it. Attain to it they never did, though over much of it David ruled at an after time: but they never possessed it. It is theirs still, however, in the promise of God, with much else, to be fulfilled in a day now very near at hand. Our main interest in it to-day is as a shadow of spiritual things, a meaning which has shaped and gives the most exceeding value to what else might seem but a barren list of names and peoples passed away. Spiritually read, they become once more living and present realities, and the fact that they do so is the fullest justification for so reading them.

The lands enumerated have two principal divisions, in the south and in the north of that already subjugated. In the south there are those of the Philistines, with whom are named the Geshurites and the Avvites. Neither Philistines nor Geshurites were Canaanites, though their land is "counted to the Canaanites," and was no doubt originally theirs. The Avvites, from the relation in which we find them in Deuteronomy (chap. ii.) seem to have belonged to those monstrous races which were as gigantic in evil as in stature, and which were marked out specially for judgment. There is a certain association of these three together, and this we shall remember; as every fact of Scripture has significance. Here, as in nature, moreover, a full induction is necessary to a right deduction.

The Philistines have already come before us in the book of Genesis, and we have seen what they represent; but we can add something to what has been there said. They are descendants of Ham, the sun-burned one, the one darkened by the light; and next of Mitzraim, "double straitness," who seems rather to have received his name from than to have given it to the land of Egypt, for which in Scripture Mitzraim stands. Thus they are natural men, and as such under the control of nature, a thing for which they are, however, righteously held responsible by Him who is ever ready with His help to lift above it.

Between the Egyptian and the Philistine there is another and important link, the Casluhim, who are named next before the Caphtorim as springing from Mitzraim: Both of these are, though not equally, connected with the Philistines, who are said to have come out of Caphtor, and to be the remnant of that island, or coast. (Jer. xlvii. 4; Amos ix. 7.) According to their name, these are, in the Ethiopic, "emigrants," but in the Hebrew, "wanderers," the "way of the Philistines" being marked in Exodus as the "near" way out of Egypt to the land. It was as easy as it was near: no Red Sea to cross nor Jordan, the Sihor named here being a mere nominal boundary-line, but not a barrier. Thus the Philistines are natural men come into spiritual things, not by the power of God, but in a natural way. In Abraham's history and Isaac's, we find them in Gerar under their king Abimelech, "my father [was] king,"

the land of the Giblite, and all Lebanon toward the sunrise, from [v] Baal-Gad beneath Mount Hermon, as far as the entrance to Hamath; all the inhabitants of the hill-country, from Lebanon as far as [w] Misrephoth-maim; all the Sidonians: I will dispossess them from before

[v] ch. 12. 7.

[w] ch. 11. 8.

the picture of that successional authority which obtains in what claims most loudly to be the church to-day; Phicol, "the voice of all," the captain of his host, as Rome rules according to what is claimed as universal tradition, the voice of the Church. Achish of Gath, in David's time, is in Ps. xxxiv. "Abimelech," his name vaunting him "a man indeed."

Thus the Philistines represent plainly the church of tradition and assumed catholicism, and we are prepared for the important place they have with regard to Israel in the generations that follow that of Joshua. But what connection have they, then, with the Casluhim and Caphtorim, and what do these names mean? Casluhim seems to present special difficulty to the lexicographers, who seldom venture an interpretation; but this can only be because of the strangeness of the meaning, and its apparent unsuitability to be the name of a nation.* Yet there is no doubt that "as those forgiven" is the unforced meaning of the word, as there can be none that what characterizes largely the ecclesiastical systems of which Rome is head is a *quasi* forgiveness, instead of an actual one. The first thing necessary for peace and for conscious relationship to God, that is, that there may be a church at all, is forgiveness of sins; and Rome recognizes this. Upon nothing does she insist more than upon the forgiveness of sins; but it is ecclesiastical forgiveness, sacramental and priestly absolution, constantly repeated, and in that proportion valueless. "For," says the apostle, "the worshipers *once* purged would have had no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. 2.) And from the inability of the Jewish sacrifices to purge once for all he urges their inability to put away sins at all. On the contrary he maintains that Christ hath "by one offering perfected *forever* them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Here at the very beginning, then, Rome's system fails: her forgiveness is but a *quasi*-forgiveness; and, with the highest claim for herself, she preaches continual doubt to her vassals; she is Philistine, and descended from the Casluhim.

But she is also a "remnant of Caphtor," which we may read in the same way as "*quasi* interpreters." Two streams alike polluted mingle to produce both the ancient and the modern Philistine. As Rome builds upon her priestly absolution, so does she claim for herself to be the infallible teacher. Yet teacher she is not, for she shuts up the Word of God, and is afraid to give any free access to it, lest the fraud should be exposed. This double test shows that she is sham all through.

Has this to do with the unusual word for the Philistine districts, *geliloth*, "circles" or "circuits"? Sinuosities like the windings of a serpent, and sometimes the perfect circle, mark the ground that Rome covers, and the lines within which she is intrenched. She will build the authority of the church upon the Bible, and then the authority of the Bible on the church. Or, with better skill, skill not her own, will run her lines in tortuous labyrinths of argument from which her perplexed victims have no escape. Her moral lines are no straighter, and the Spirit of Jesus has for her no better expression than in the blasphemous sophistries of Jesuitism.

The five cities of the Philistines give us in growing intensity their menace to Israel. Gaza, the "strong," to this day a greater city than Jerusalem. It is power that above all Rome seeks,—earthly power by whatever means acquired, and her spiritual power she uses for temporal aggrandizement. "I sit a queen,

* And this kind of reasoning evidently influences them so largely as to make the meaning of proper names as given by them very unreliable. Their derivations of them are often the most arbitrary, and are the more approved the more they favor the most commonplace rendering. Its being literal is of very slight account.

the children of Israel: only divide it to Israel by lot for an [x]inheritance, as I have commanded thee. And now apportion this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes, and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

[x] ch. 14. 1, 2. *cf.* Eph. 1. 14.

and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," is her language; and to secure this she is content to be a harlot with the kings of the earth. (Rev. xvii.)

Ashdod, the "spoiler," shows us how she sustains and increases her strength. Hers is the parasite growth that saps the vigor of that which supports it. She may well be reckoned as a Canaanite who puts a tariff on sin itself, and shamefully sells every gift of God for money. The countries most Roman Catholic are those most spoiled, and that not of money only but of all that is really precious.

Ashkelon, the "fire of infamy," shows us next the lightest of her weapons against those that resist her sway. Curses, reproach of heresy, railings of all kinds, she has ever dealt in, blasting the good name of all she dare attack in this way. It is a necessity laid upon her to destroy the character of those whom she dooms to more serious penalties. And—

Gath, "the wine-press," goes on to this. It is used in Scripture for the infliction of wrath, even divine wrath (Rev. xiv. 19, 20; xix. 15); and this is what Rome feigns her own to be. Finally—

Ekron, "rooting out," carries this on to complete extirpation of all that differ from her.

These, then, are the Philistine cities. With them the Geshurites are associated. "Geshur," we are told, means "bridge;" but there is no mention of such a thing, and therefore no word for it, in Scripture. It may be a compound word, the first syllable much abbreviated, and mean "haughty observer," which, however, though suitable enough for associates of the Philistines, we cannot with any certainty apply.

The Avvites are said in Deut. ii. to have been living in villages as far as Gaza, and to have been destroyed by the Caphtorim out of Caphtor, who dwelt in their stead. Here the Philistines themselves, or those who by union with the Casluhim became afterward the Philistines, seem to be intended. The "Avvites," or "Avvim," mean "perverters" or "overturners;" and while God used the Caphtorim for the destruction of a people more evil than themselves, yet they seem not to have been fully destroyed, but mingled with their conquerors, who may have learned their ways. It is certain that a Christianity already corrupted has thus prevailed over forms of heathenism, to which it became itself assimilated; so that that which in one sense had been destroyed, in another, survived. And this seems to be the lesson here.

These are the southern foes, afterward to prove such thorns in Israel's sides. In the north were genuine Canaanites, especially the Sidonians. They were pre-eminently the merchant-race, the first-born of Canaan (Gen. x.), and had their characteristics. With them are joined the Giblites ("borderers"?) on the northern slopes of Lebanon, which belonged, all of it to Israel, though never possessed by them. Of all this we can say little to purpose here.

But how large a portion had Israel, thus, which they never claimed in faith, and never got, although the grace of God preserves it for them yet, with much more. And how little have Christians of the land that is their own, and of how much do modern Philistines and Canaanites dispossess them! We have of necessity not the material for working out such a problem. By and by we shall know, and judge ourselves for all our folly and unbelief. Happy are they who even now apprehend what they can of the glorious inheritance!

2. We now pass on to look at the inheritance of the two tribes and a half beyond Jordan, an inheritance here confirmed to them as having fulfilled the conditions stipulated by Moses. (Num. xxxii. 29, 30.) The peculiar way in which this section commences cannot but be noticed, almost obscuring as it does

(XIII. 8-33.)

Confirmation of the inheritance of the two tribes and a half.

1. (*vv.* 8-14.) The whole inheritance.

2. [1]With him the [v]Reubenite and the Gadite received their inheritance, which Moses gave them across Jordan toward [sun]rise,—as Moses the servant of Jehovah gave them; from Aroer which is on the bank of the brook Arnon, and the city which is in the middle of the ravine, and all the table-land of Medeba as far as Dibon; and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the children of Ammon; and Gilead, and the territory of the Geshurite and the Maachathite, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah,—all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who ruled in Ashtaroth and in Edrei,—he remained of the residue of the giants: and Moses smote them, and dispossessed them. [z]But the children of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurite and the Maachathite, but Geshur and Maachah dwell amid the Israelites to this day. [a]Only to the tribe of Levi gave he no inheritance: the offerings by fire to Jehovah, God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he spake unto him.

[v] Num. 32. 33-42.

[z] Jud. 1. 27.

[a] ver. 33.

2. (15-33.) The division of the land.

*a* (15-23.) The portion of Reuben: the subject will of adherence to God.

[2](*a*) And Moses gave to the tribe of the children of [b]Reuben according to their families. And theirs was the territory from Aroer which is on the bank of the brook Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the ravine, and all the upland by Medeba; Heshbon and all her cities that are in the upland; Dibon, and Bamoth-

[b] ch. 12. 2. Num. 21. 21-30. Num. 32. 37, 38.

the new beginning; but that there is this here is nevertheless plain enough upon even a slight consideration, and the reason for the peculiarity may be better considered when we come to look at the portion of Manasseh.

(i.) But first we are to view the whole inheritance, essentially as we know the two Amorite kingdoms of Sihon and Og. Along with these we have now the territory of the Geshurites and Maachathites, which were mentioned in Deuteronomy as bounding Argob in Bashan, but not explicitly as coming within the limits of the two tribes and a half. Geshurites we have just met with in the south-west, probably the same people, though divided into two portions; and if "Geshur" signifies "haughty observer," "Maachah" means "oppression." They are little noticed afterward, and we can say little or nothing about them. The Israelites did not dispossess them, and we find kings of both places in David's time; so that they must have soon drifted into independence.

(ii.) (*a*) It is in what was Sihon's kingdom that Reuben finds his portion, in the southern half of it, in close proximity to Moab. Indeed it had, as we know, belonged to Moab, and been lost by them to Sihon. All this has to do with the meaning of what is before us, little as we may be able to render the meaning.

Reuben ("see a son") we have seen to represent man as the offspring of God by creation, gifted with that intelligent will in which lies the natural image of God; but which as fallen has broken out in self-will and corruption. Humbled and restored by grace it becomes the will of dependent cleaving to God, of that faith by which alone we are truly sons, as we have seen in Reuben in the wilderness. It is in this aspect we must consider him here, forgetting even, as we may believe, the failure which has shown itself in choosing for himself his inheritance where now we find him. God is over it all, and has for us in it other lessons than that of failure: and this will be easily apparent as we proceed.

> Baal, and Beth-Baal-meon, and Jahzah, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, and Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zereth-shahar in the mountain of the valley, and Beth-Peor, and the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth, all the cities of the upland: even the whole kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned at Heshbon, whom Moses smote,—him and the princes of Midian, Evi and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, the

For in the first place, if Reuben in this way speaks now of faith, how significant is it that his portion is found in Sihon's kingdom, and that it is he that builds up again Sihon's capital, Heshbon, which falls to him. (Num. xxxii. 37.) "Heshbon" means "the reason, cause, or ground of a thing as an object of thought or study." (*Wilson.*) It is rendered in the common version "device," "reason;" "In Heshbon they have devised evil against her," says the prophet, playing upon the name. (Jer. xlviii. 2.) Heshbon cannot be maintained by Sihon against Reuben, although the Moabite may have had to give it up to him; and so "reason" is not alien to faith, which only destroys it in its alien form, to build it up anew more securely. Its after-history we must consider later. Dibon also ("sufficiency of knowledge"?) falls to Reuben, whose boundary southward is Arnon, ("the perpetual stream,") the limit of "living water;" on the bank of which Aroer is the same word as that for the "heath" (or "savin") in the desert, which furnishes to the prophet the picture of the curse upon "the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah." (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.) Then the "table-land by Medeba" ("quiet waters") characterizes in general Reuben's inheritance: a green upland pasture—"green pastures" and "quiet waters"! He too has the "slopes of Pisgah," and the "splendor of the dawn" (Zereth-shahar), and the places devoted to Baal he purifies and renames. If we cannot go further than this, is it not enough to show the excellency and suitability of Reuben's portion?

Nevertheless somewhat more may be attempted. It is divided evidently into four parts, the numerical character of which is easily recognized. The first section reminds us of the independence of faith; the second, of its dependence; the third contains twelve names, which ought thus to show how faith manifests itself in the establishment of the divine government everywhere, being itself, of course, everywhere subject; while the fourth is but a boundary-line.

The first begins also with a boundary-line, which is that of Moab; where Aroer, (literally, "laid bare") significantly shows the acceptance of the divine estimate of any merely human trust. This is, on the one side, clearly the secret of the independence of faith. Then we have a nameless "city by the brook," which in such connection may speak of busy activity content to be unknown to man; while the upland by Medeba ("quiet waters"), with the waters connected with both the previous places, shows how by the power and sustenance of the Spirit alone is all individuality maintained. Good and necessary lessons are these to-day! Never more needed.

The second section has but one name, though with many implied relationships; and while it shows the dependence of faith, stamps this as Heshbon, "*reason.*" This indeed it is, and not credulity,—not blindness, though at times and in a certain sense, as with Abraham, it may not know whither it is going. But unbelief *never* really knows,—knows least where it sees plainest; while faith sees even in the dark—sees God at least, and rests: walks in no vain show, but in the truth.

The third section has twelve names, as already said, a number speaking easily and beautifully, though some of the details may be obscure. 12 is 3 × 4, as we well know; and the four parts may indicate, (1) that the kingdom is above all; (2) yet now in conflict; (3) the fruit resultant; (4) its universality. To which, as a fifth part—though only an appendix to the rest—there is added a deutero-

princes of Sihon dwelling in the land. [c]Balaam also, the son of Beor, the diviner, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among those that were slain by them. And the boundary of the children of Reuben was the Jordan and [its] border. This is the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages. [c] Num. 31. 8.

b (24–28.) Gad: spiritual growth and courage.

(*b*) And Moses gave unto the tribe of [d]Gad, [even] according to their families to the tribe of Gad. And their territory was Jaazer and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, as far as Aroer which is opposite Rabbah; and from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim; and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir; and in the valley, Beth-haram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, the Jordan and [d] Num. 32. 34, 35.

nomic recital of how this land had become theirs by the overthrow of Sihon and of Midian, and of Balaam also.

(*1*) Dibon, "sufficiency of knowledge," or "discernment," shows first that the kingdom of God in the soul is by the truth. This is, indeed, its complete and moral supremacy. All error disappears. Bamoth-Baal, the "heights" whereon men adore their idols, fall thus into the hands of faith; as does Beth-baal-meon, the "house of the Baal of the dwelling," the abode of idolatry in the house and heart.

(*2*) But the kingdom is yet only recognized by faith, and is thus in conflict in the world. Jahzah, "treading down," Israel's battle-field with Sihon, implies other fields trodden by the feet of combatants; while Kedemoth speaks of "confronting" hosts. Mephaath, "shining" may intimate what in the Lord's eyes is the lustre of this "good fight of faith."

(*3*) There is fruit also: Kirjathaim, "double city," may imply the concentration of energy, and unification of diverse capacities,—that fitting together in one which comes naturally from the drill and discipline of war. Sibmah, if with some we render it "fragrance," may speak of that diffusion of sweetness, the unconscious ministry to others of that which is the fruit of personal character. And Zereth-shahar, the "brightness of dawn," as seen from the "mount within the valley," gives the anticipation from the high place to which the low may bring you, of that sure coming day which gilds for us already, thank God, the clouds of night.

(*4*) Beth-peor is, as to its import, doubtful. Pisgah must speak of faith's "survey" of the future inheritance; Beth-jeshimoth, the "house of the wastes," of provision for the wilderness. These together imply God's sovereignty over the future and the present. Does Beth-peor complete this by showing Him sovereign over that which led us captive in the past? This we must leave as but a question; certainly, however,—

(*5*) The recital of the victories by which they had gained possession of the land is quite in keeping with such a thought.

Finally, the Jordan is plainly, in one sense, the limit of faith. In the joy beyond, we shall be "face to face."

(*b*) Gad lies next to Reuben: Gad, the type of spiritual increase, and of a militant condition too. Both things are contained in Leah's exclamation, "A troop cometh."* Spiritual increase can hardly be without conflict in a world like this; and the men of Gad we find in David's time eminent as warriors. (1 Chron. xii. 8–14.)

* Which thus again vindicates this reading of the passage. (Gen. xxx. 11.)

[its] border, as far as the extremity of the sea of Chinnereth across Jordan toward the [sun]rise. This is the inheritance of the children of Gad, according to their families, the cities and their villages.

c (29–33.) Machir son of Manasseh: "he who recollects."

(c) And Moses gave unto the half-tribe of [e]Manasseh; and this was what belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh according to their families: and their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the Havvoth-Jair which are in Bashan—sixty cities. And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan [belonged] to the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, to half the children of Machir according to their families.

e Num. 32. 39–42.

Gad shares with Reuben the land of Sihon; and their possessions seem at first sight strangely intermingled. Gad builds Dibon, though it falls to Reuben; and though Reuben builds and is allotted Heshbon, yet we find it afterward given to the Levites as a city of Gad (chap. xxi. 39). It was on the boundary-line, and might easily belong to either; but in this interweaving of Reuben and Gad, do we not find how inseparable "increase" is from faith; and how, if faith build up reason, it will take growth and militant energy to hold it? And so Gad also builds for Reuben Dibon ("sufficiency of knowledge"), for so Peter gives the connection—"Add to your faith virtue (valor), and to virtue knowledge."

Suitable also it is that "all the cities of Gilead" (the "heap of witness")* should belong to Gad; and half of Ammon (see Deut. ii. *notes*), in the face of which they build another Aroer. Also that they should have Mahanaim with its memorial from Jacob's history. Would one could say more as to Gad! but as to what should be possessed, how much remains!

(c) We may pass, then, to Manasseh: and here how exquisitely suited is it that Manasseh, the one "forgetful" of things behind, and of Manasseh just the children of Machir, "he who recollects" (of course, that to which he is pressing on), should have the kingdom of Og in Bashan put into their hands! For the things of the world can only be rightly used by him who is pressing on to another; and this is the only one of the tribes found on the east side of Jordan that in fact inherits *on both sides of the river*. Is it not this that we are reminded of in that strange beginning of the second section, so connected with the first: "With him the Reubenite and the Gadite received their inheritance," where "with him" is with Manasseh, to whom with the other nine tribes Joshua has just been commanded to distribute the land west of Jordan? Reuben and Gad are on the east side, yet with Manasseh, who is both east and west. The oneness of the tribe is thus emphasized, spite of this: and thus indeed Manasseh approaches nearer the final division in the yet coming day, when each tribe receives its inheritance on both sides, the boundary lines running east and west across the river. Whatever, then, Manasseh's personal failure in all this, it seems clear that we are not to regard it here, but to see in him the competence to use the world as having the heart in heaven.

Among Machir's sons we find Jair active in the conquest of the land. He is, according to his name, the "enlightener," and the introduction of light is the way to conquer Satan's kingdom of darkness. Life comes into the soul with light, if it be true light: so the cities Jair conquers he calls the "*lives* (*havvoth*)

*Elsewhere (Num. xxvi. 29, *n.*), I have accepted, with most, Gesenius' suggestion of "hard, rocky;" but Fay, even while not altogether refusing it, urges a number of texts against this (Num. xxxii. 1; Jer. viii. 22; xlvi. 11; l. 19; Cant. iv. 1; vi. 4). Jacob's history governs so much in the scenes of his eventful life, that the connection of Galeed with Gilead strongly commends itself.

"All the cities of Gilead" here are all that belonged to the kingdom of Sihon.

This is that which Moses allotted for inheritance in the plains of Moab across Jordan from Jericho toward the [sun]rising. And unto the children of [f]Levi Moses gave no inheritance: Jehovah the God of Israel, he is their inheritance, as he spake unto them.

[f] ch. 14. 3, 4.

(XIV., XV.)

Judah: the spirit of praise.

1. (xiv.) How power to obtain the promise is perpetuated.

3. [1]And this is what the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which [g]Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel allotted them for inheritance: their inheritance was by lot as Jehovah had commanded by the hand of Moses for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. For Moses gave inheritance to the two tribes and the half tribe beyond Jordan, and to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them; but the children of Joseph were two tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim; and they gave to the Levites no portion in the land save [h]cities to dwell in, and their pasturage for their cattle and for their substance. As Jehovah commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they apportioned the land.

[g] Num. 34. 17, 29.

[h] ch. 13. 33. ch. 18. 7.

And the children of Judah drew near unto Joshua at [i]Gilgal, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the word which Jehovah spake unto Moses the [j]man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. [k]Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him back word as it was in my heart. And my brethren who

[i] ch. 10. 43. ch. 5. 7.

[j] Ps. 90.

[k] Num. 13. 30.

of Jair." Men call Og's luxury and self-pleasing "life," but Jair shows us what is really life.

Machir shares Gilead with Gad; and this needs no further interpreting. The lesson of Manasseh here is as simple to read as it is good to learn and practice. Only in practice can it be really learnt. The reminder as to Levi's portion closes fittingly this section. Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Levi,—all belong to us.

Notice how the spiritual meaning in these three tribes connects together; how naturally the one develops out of the other; how really we are on the earth side of things all through. The more it is searched into, the more it will appear how consistent and harmonious is the whole of this.

3. We now cross the river, and come to the inheritance of Judah, as it would seem, the first possession on the west side, and by far the largest possession. The Spirit of God evidently marks it out for us with peculiar care, and when we consider the prominence of Judah in the after-history, and the spiritual significance (two things more closely connected than is usually imagined), we are at no loss to understand this. The spirit of praise must have precedence of all else in the land of the inheritance of the people of God, and will put us in possession, most of all, of our inheritance there.

(i.) The first few verses here emphasize the fact that the inheritance was all given by lot at the hands of Eleazar and Joshua, and the heads of the people; and that in the distribution Joseph's two tribes compensated for the lack of territory for the tribe of Levi. We have then a most important lesson which Caleb, the whole-hearted, is brought forward to give us. The man of eighty-five appears with the children of Judah before Joshua at Gilgal, to claim the inheritance promised to him forty-five years before. Save Joshua, all his gener-

went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I fully followed Jehovah my God. And Moses sware in that day, saying, [l]Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance and thy children's forever, because thou hast fully followed Jehovah my God. And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, since Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now, behold, I am eighty and five years old this day: I am still as [m]strong this day as in the day when Moses sent me; as my vigor then, so my vigor now for war, to go out and to come in. And now give me this mountain of which Jehovah spake that day; for thou heardest that day that the [n]Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified. If Jehovah be with me, then I shall dispossess them, as Jehovah hath said. And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron for an inheritance to Caleb the son of Jephunneh: wherefore [o]Hebron hath been the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because he fully followed Jehovah the God of Israel. And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-Arba: [he was] the great man among the Anakim. And the land rested from war.

*l* Num. 14. 24.

*m* Deut. 34. 7. Ps. 92. 14. *cf.* 2 Sam. 21. 15

*n* Num. 13. 39.

*o* ch. 15. 13.

ation has passed away, but he remains, and with all the strength of that former time. The Anakim whom he saw at Hebron remained there yet; and they must be subdued by him, if he is to receive the promise; but he desires no less difficult task; and his faith is as strong as his body. No need of many words to enforce the lesson in this case. We see at once how spiritual strength is perpetuated; and have it pressed upon us how our promised portion must be laid hold of and enjoyed.

Caleb is here, as once before, the Kenezite, and there is a Kenaz elsewhere said to be his brother. We shall not discuss in this place the difficulties of his genealogy; but what does the name mean? At least as good as any thing given, and completely in the line of thought of Caleb's history, would be "receptacle of strength;" and in this way Othniel, of whom we hear in the next chapter and in Judges, would be the fitting son of Kenaz.

(ii.) The boundaries of the tribe of Judah are next marked out. It lies southern-most of all the tribes, bounded on the south by the land of Edom and the wilderness of Zin; on the east, by the salt, or dead sea; on the west, by the great sea, or Mediterranean; and only on the north by Israelitish territory. Thus Judah, lifted up upon her hills, has a most varied outlook. Within also she is divided into the south land, where a large number of her cities lay, the low-land, or shephelah, (which included the Philistine plain,) the hill-country, and the wilderness. How good is it thus to realize that one can face outside the world of the natural man, the wilderness condition, the awful lake of judgment, the sea of instability and distress, no less than the blessed portion of the people of God, and give praise in view of all! While also the most varied conditions affecting ourselves may give occasion not merely to contentment, but to adoration! And it is only in a spirit of praise that we can rightly view all this. Judah speaks of that kind of praise which is termed "*confession.*" It is the confession of *God*, of course, that is intended by it; and when as redeemed we know Him, then, as knowing that all things are in His hands, even where we know nothing more, and cannot penetrate the mystery of His dispensations, we have the fullest assurance that can be given us that all is well. Egypt, the Red

2. (xv. 1-12.) The boundary of Judah. *a* (*vv.* 1-4.) The south border: separation from the spirit of independence.

[2](*a*) And the lot for the tribe of the children of [p]Judah according to their families was to the border of Edom, the wilderness of Zin southward, in the extreme south. And their [q]south border was from the end of the salt sea, from the bay that faceth southward; and it went out south of the ascent of Akrabbim, and passed on to Zin; and it went up on the south of Kadesh-

[p] Num. 26. 19, 55.

[q] Num. 34. 3-5.

Sea deliverance, the wilderness, with its miracles of care and its holy lessons, all lie southward from Judah: Judah fronts them all, and how can one look in this direction, from the land flowing with milk and honey to which we have been brought, without adoring confession?

No wonder, then, if Judah take the lead and be the "lawgiver." (Ps. cviii. 8.) In the hearts of His worshiping people God will be supreme; the spirit of praise governs the heart and rules the life for God. Here is the citadel, which if surrendered, all is given up: when Judah goes into captivity, the national life is gone.

(*a*) The southern boundary comes naturally first. It should have meaning for us: can we attempt to explain it spiritually? Critics of a certain kind will laugh their loudest very likely, but we have come hopelessly under their condemnation long ago, and the desire to show that every part of the Word of God is profitable for edification is more attractive than their condemnation is alarming. If we should make some mistakes, let those who have made none cast their stones.

Over the boundary lie Edom, the wilderness of wandering, and, at a greater distance, Egypt. Edom and Egypt are allied as types of the natural world,—in the one, wilder; in the other, cultured; but both alike in independence of God. The wilderness shows the unbelief of the people of God bringing them back to the same condition of independence in departing from the living God. Israel's boundary line may well show us, therefore, how God would separate His people from this sin.

In fact, we shall find lessons of this kind here, and in a certain connection with one another and progress of thought, such as a line traced in this way might suggest. The first three places here seem to give us the sin of independency as looked at in itself; the next two, the divine help against it; the three following, help of more internal sort; the fourth, and last, the witness of *nature;* and this division would be a true numerical one. The border throughout is nothing but an air-line, which requires, therefore, intelligence to discern, and obedience to maintain.

Of the first three, the first is the salt sea; and measurably we already know what this means. It is the awful similitude of the pit of woe, into which the river of death pours unceasingly without overflow or escape again. It fertilizes nothing, but abides under the curse of barrenness., which is but the perpetuation of what is in the nature of sin. Its first law, which we may most naturally see in this glimpse of one end of it (for we do not see it all), is just this utter barrenness which its waters, wherever they are, produce. This is only a first thought, and a negative one indeed; and yet in God's creation, which all was once made good, and for good, barrenness is of itself a terrible reproach and stain.

But we have a further development at Maaleh-Akrabbim, the "ascent of the scorpions." The sting of the scorpion is in its tail, and this is the way of sin, which may have its "pleasures for a season," but, like the enchanted wine-cup, "*at last* it biteth as a serpent, and stingeth as an adder." (Prov. xxiii. 32.) Sin,—independence of God,—is not only barren: it has poison in its bowels, and death as its end.

Thirdly, we have Zin, a "thorn;" and a thorn is the natural curse: "thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." The blight of divine judgment abides thus upon the sinner; and in this threefold picture this is the last feature: sin is in its nature what calls for and abides under divine wrath. This

barnea, and passed to Hetzron; and it went up to Addar, and turned to Karkaah, and passed to Azmon; and it went out at the brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border.

*b* (*v.* 5.) The east border: the witness of salvation.

(*b*) And the [r]eastern border was the salt sea as far as the end of Jordan.

[r] Num. 34. 12.

is no arbitrary thing, but must be, unless there is redemption; and this the cry of the twenty-second psalm declares.

God's people *are* redeemed; but He must still show His holiness in His dealings with them; and of this, Kadesh-barnea, the "sanctuary of the wanderer," may now well remind us. God had His place of refuge for His people in the wilderness, but it was a "sanctuary," a *holy* refuge, and they for their sins were "wanderers." In making it a city of Israel He bade them take home both the grace and the holiness of this to their hearts.

Hetzron, "inclosure," may exhibit another kind of care, the hedge around His people which nothing but that which shall work blessing for them may come through. God guards them thus from what would from their feebleness be too much for them. This is a constant mercy, of which we need to be reminded, because we are necessarily so little conscious of it. "He will not suffer us to be tempted beyond that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it."

We come now to what speaks of deeper and more internal work. First, Addar, which means "glory," "honor," or else "a goodly *robe;*" such as are the white "garments" which those in Sardis had not defiled. (Rev. iii. 4.) These, of course speak, of *practical* righteousness: our righteousness in Christ is wholly beyond even the thought of defilement. The suggestion of such a robe is fully in the line of thought in this place, and may well be accepted as what is here. A robe to keep unspotted is a good argument against the seduction of sin.

We have next Karkaah, which is a word used for "pavement," but compounded of two words which together imply "extension of what is joined together." We need not think, then, of a pavement: the lesson may be of that mutual help rendered by those each severally feeble, which is indeed God's way of making His people realize their need of each other, and training them in lowliness: a barrier against independence surely.

And thus, last of the cities here is Azmon, "strong;" for God has strength for His people, to be found in the sanctuary, but in the way of lowliness and dependence, so that we reach it by the way of Karkaah, as we have said. Truth is here in most fitting order, and to take it thus gives it power and beauty.

Finally, the stream of Egypt becomes the boundary to the sea, as to which we have no great interest in this connection in deciding whether it is the *Wady el Arish* that is meant, as commonly believed, or rather, as Poole contends, the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. That in the promise to Abraham Israel's border is the Nile there is no right question; but there the Euphrates is the boundary at the other end. In the division here there is as yet no possession of so wide a region, and the limit seems to fall short every way. But enough has been already said with regard to this.

In any case, the "stream of Egypt" would suggest to us still the thought of that ministry of natural blessings, which, while to natural men they seem so much a matter of course, have in them, to any one whom faith has restored to proper reason, abundant witness of the hand from which they come, and thus against independence. This too would make a fourth division of this boundary line, strictly according to numeric symbolism. Thus it is completed.

(*b*) The eastern border was the salt sea in its whole length to the mouth of the Jordan. The east has its two aspects spiritually, let us remember, as there are two words which express it in Hebrew. It was the place of sunrise, in this way of hope, though it might be far off. In the second sense, it was what

c (5-11.) The north border: the manifestation of Judah in relation to Ephraim.

(*c*) And the border of the *s*north side was from the bay of the sea at the end of Jordan; and the border went up to *t*Beth-hoglah, and passed along from the north to Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; and the border went

*s* cf. ch. 18. 15–19.

*t* ch. 18. 21.

immediately confronted one, and commonly evil. The sea of salt, or dead sea, suggests naturally the latter of these thoughts. From it Judah's possession rose rapidly and in sublimity until Jerusalem towered thirty-five hundred feet above its surface; how different from the long slope of the land toward the western sea, ending in the broad wheat-plains of Philistia!

The salt sea, too, however evil in suggestion, is but a "lake." You can look over it to the hills beyond: it is not interminable. And so also at the end we read of a "lake" of fire and brimstone; not a sea, with its shore out of sight, but defined and limitable, thank God! and even narrow in its limits, though in itself terrible, as it is meant to be.

Here there is no fire, not even a volcano-mouth; but stifling heat there is, and the smell of sulphur, which abounds in it. All living things that the Jordan brings into it die; but there is no breath of disease from its deep blue waters! Such is this type of sin's awful judgment, between which and Israel's blessed portion there is no middle ground at all. The shores of the land of Judah lie all along it, and the homes of "praise" rise in full view of the lake of judgment. There will be, and, thank God, there need be, no forgetfulness in heaven: our praise *here*, too, is founded upon knowledge, and the full light of eternity will but perfect it.

Thus the salt sea bounds indeed Judah's possessions; but guards, and not invades them; as from the cross, from One forsaken of God, there was the witnessing voice, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." And how should not *they* praise who as the fruit of that work are saved and brought nigh to God? How can the view of the judgment of sin do aught but deepen in the soul the apprehension of salvation: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood!"

The border on the second side is one of strict separation—of salvation: not an air-line now.

(*c*) Judah's border on the north is Israelite, the only part of it that is. From what, then, must it be looked at as really separating? or what is the meaning of the boundary-line here? As the *third* border, we may characterize it, I think, as one of manifestation, bringing out more distinctly what belongs to worship itself, its place and power in connection with what the other tribes stand for spiritually.

Of these other tribes only Ephraim and Manasseh get their portion at this time. Judah's boundary never touches Ephraim's; but as yet there is nothing between them but unappropriated land. Hence it would seem that this boundary of Judah has respect as yet to Ephraim, and this will be confirmed by further examination.

Joseph's two tribes we have already seen to be connected together in their spiritual meaning, as might have been anticipated. "Ephraim" speaks of "fruitfulness;" "Manasseh," of the energy that presses forward to the goal, "forgetting" what is behind; a spirit not ascetic, though it might seem so, but acquisitive, and which is the spirit that makes fruitful. Thus the two tribes are one.

Judah and Joseph take possession of their lots in distinct priority of all others on the west of Jordan, and thus are in some sense to be looked at as dividing the land between them. They afterward did, as it were, divide the land (alas! in opposition to each other) as heads of the respective kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the latter of which is often spoken of as "Ephraim." In reference to each other they do, in fact, represent typically two spheres of the spiritual life,

up to [u]Debir from the valley of Achor, and turned northward toward [v]Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the water-

[u] ch. 7. 26. ver. 15. ch. 12. 13.
[v] ch. 14. 6. Jud. 2. 1.

absolutely necessary to each other and to the maintenance of this, and which yet have strange tendencies to divorce themselves from one another. These are, of course, the objective and subjective spheres, of faith and of practice, of piety Godward and manward; though none of these terms fully distinguish what God would never have separated, and which never can be, without the destruction of both; as Israel's divided kingdom was her ruin.

Judah and Ephraim alike reach across the whole breadth of territory, from the Jordan to the sea; but at no point do they touch one another. Between them are afterward placed two tribes, who, on opposite sides—toward Jordan and toward the sea—fill up the gap, and join the separated lands together. As we look at them we shall find how truly they are intended to be holdfasts on either side, and how beautifully in their spiritual meaning they fill up the interval.

Benjamin comes first of these, and fills up the Jordan side. The root-meaning here we have in the first notice in the book of Genesis (chap. xxxv., see vol. i. p. 99, *n.*). "Benjamin" is "Christ in us," the "I, yet not I," of the apostle (Gal. ii. 20), the real power for a walk on earth. "Not I, but Christ liveth in me;" which, let us note, is not the same as, "Christ is my life;" nor is it either, "To me to live is Christ;" though nearer akin to the latter than the former. But the one is *aim*, while the other is that realization of faith upon which it is dependent. "Christ has been crucified for me," he says; "it was my death, though He bore it: I, then, am crucified with Christ; yet I live, really live now: death is behind me, not before me; I live beyond my death." Then he shows the practical effect of this: "I live because Christ lives; I live before God in Him; God sees me no more but in identification with the Son of His love, who appears in His presence for me. I also look where God looks; I see what God sees: it is no more myself I see; I have lost myself in my wondrous Representative, and even as I live down here, it is Christ that lives in me: I have exchanged myself for Him."

Now, if this is what Benjamin means, he certainly in an admirable way fills the gap between Judah and Ephraim. This is, as it were, the objective in the subjective: it is what is before the eyes wrought into practical life. It is the worshiping heart pulsating through the body of the worshiper.

But Benjamin nevertheless does not fill all the space here. Westward, toward the great sea, another tribe is found, very different in the significance attaching to it from that of Benjamin. It is Dan, the last of all to find his place, and the most unsatisfactory of all perhaps in his after-history. But the failure has nothing to do with what he represents; and Benjamin's history is also a sad one. Oftentimes the most blessed truths seem to be those that have the least influence over us. Dan in the wilderness is leader of one of the four camps there, and, as we have seen, though the son of a handmaid, represents "rule;" which is in fact service, where it is according to God.

But rule, to be exercised aright, must also be rule over one's self first,—self-judgment; and Dan's name, we know, means "judge." Judgment, which implies discernment, is the ruler's part. *Self*-judgment begins for the Christian with the apprehension of the cross, which is God's estimate of man, the most solemn, because not that of an enemy, but of One who so loved us as to bear for us in Christ the judgment He had pronounced.

We have come thus far, then, toward Benjamin, with whose territory Dan's joins toward the middle of the land. But Dan gives only the negative side of Benjamin, not the positive side. It is the judgment of self he emphasizes, which joins on, on the one side, to the "worship" of Judah,—every mind the least taught of God knows how,—and on the other, links with Ephraim's "fruitfulness" as intelligibly.

course; and the border passed to the waters of Enshemesh and ended at [w] Enrogel.
And the border went up to the valley of the son of

[w] 2 Sam. 17. 17. 1 Kings 1. 9.

The gap, then, is filled up in the most perfect way; and this should help us much in the study of the boundary-lines, which we find in the case of Judah's first part plainly having Ephraim rather in view than Benjamin, as already said. What shows this is the way in which places in Benjamin itself are used to mark the line, as Beth-hoglah, and Beth-arabah, and Jebusi, or Jerusalem. On the west end of the boundary-line there are named similarly places that afterward belonged to Dan.

The description divides the boundary into two parts, the first of which, rising from the mouth of the Jordan, ends at Enrogel, just outside Jerusalem. The second part passes from Enrogel to the sea. The first part, in accordance with its being such, shows the priority of Judah to Ephraim,—no fruitfulness being possible till God takes his right place with the soul,—till it worships.

In this first part there are again five divisions, indicated by the repetition of "the border," as if it started afresh. It will be seen too that the second of these contains Beth-hoglah and Beth-Arabah, while the fifth speaks of Enshemesh and Enrogel.

(*1*)* We are first of all directed to the point of commencement of the boundary: "*And the border of the north side was from the bay of the sea at the end of Jordan.*" "From judgment into which death brings" is clearly the typical meaning. Worship begins with the recognition of our natural lost condition, without which we might have an angel's praise, but not a saint's. That which begins here is the song of *grace*, of one who is a "brand plucked from the burning," as it were the fire already kindled, judgment already beginning to take effect: a "bay of the sea" being, one may suppose, like the antechamber of hell. Almighty power and sovereign grace alone could work here, and thus with these the song begins.

(*2*) Next, we have the way of salvation: "*And the border went up to Beth-hoglah, and passed along from the north to Beth-arabah.*" The places are both in Benjamin, as was before said. Beth-hoglah is interpreted by Simonis, from the Syriac and Arabic, as "house of the partridge;" for which last Young gives "magpie." Neither meaning connects with Scripture or yields any intelligible meaning that one can see. As Hebrew, taking Hoglah as two words, the first letter of the second being dropped because identical with the last letter of the first, it might mean "the revealed sacrifice," *hag* being either a feast or the sacrifice of the feast. The "*house* of the revealed sacrifice" would be specially fitting in reference to the passover.

The other name here, Beth-arabah, is undoubtedly "the house of the wilderness;" and passover and wilderness would in this connection remind us of that love and care which had delivered Israel from judgment in Egypt, and sheltered them on their journey to the land. For us the types speak easily and need no expounding. A salvation to the uttermost, or redemption and preservation through the Lamb of sacrifice, suit well the numerical place.

(*3*) Consecration follows: as we have had chapters from Exodus in the last section, so now, equally in order, we have one from Leviticus: "*And the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben.*" Bohan means "thumb;" and we have no trace any where else of the thing or of the man referred to here. What profit are we to find unless we are at liberty to interpret the name?

When we have the name, how are we to apply it? The way to learn this, one might suppose, would be to see what we can find in Scripture in connection with the "thumb." The search need not be long. With the exception of the story of Adonibezek in the next book, the only Scripture references to the

*These divisions are too minute for any corresponding notice in the text; but they are numbered to direct attention to their numerical structure.

[x] Hinnom, to the shoulder south of the Jebusite (that is Jerusalem); and the border went up to the top of the mount which is in front of the valley of Hinnom west- [x] 2 Kings 23. 10. Jer. 32. 35. Is. 30. 33.

thumb are found in connection with the consecration of the priests and of the cleansing of the leper in Lev. viii. and xiv.* Have we not here, then, a plain intimation of what this would remind us? The thumbs of the priests or of the leper touched with the blood of sacrifice, and then with oil upon the blood, were tokens of consecration, in this double way, to the service of God. (*Notes*, vol. i, pp. 310, 330.)

The stone of Bohan was naturally a memorial pillar such as that of Jacob at Bethel, and, as with him, a witness to some divine, not human, work: up to this time, we have no account of any man or human work so memorialized. Such a witness to God would suit well a consecrated hand, and that of a Reubenite, who speaks of the will that cleaves to Him. A stone would be meant to abide; and thus the stone of Bohan would be very plainly the memorial of consecration to God.

Every child of God is at the same time a "saint"—sanctified by the work of Christ and by the Spirit which dwells in him. He needs but to carry this in remembrance. We are set apart to God, not by any voluntary engagement of our own, but by Another's devotedness to death for us. We are bought with a price, and belong to Him who has paid the ransom.

(*4*) We have now what is more difficult: "*And the border went up to Debir from the valley of Achor, and turned northward toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the water-course.*" Here are two things, though connected: first, the ascent to Debir from the valley of Achor. Both words we are familiar with, though Debir is not the city of that name that we have before had; it has, however, the same significance, (either "speaker" or "oracle,") while Achor is the valley named "troubling," from the punishment of Achan. This part, therefore, seems simple, that while here in the world we have to meet the trouble which is the fruit of sin, yet there is a way of access (which is thus also an ascent out of it) to that oracular voice which (as in Achan's case) gives the meaning of it all. The number of this section governing it, shows where the emphasis is to be laid, and that the "oracle" has reference to the "troubling;" which the history too confirms.

The second part now completes the lesson: the border turns *toward* Gilgal, not reaching it indeed, for the words seem to indicate that Gilgal is on the *north* side of the water-course, opposite the way of ascent by which the border goes, which is on the south side. And this the modern investigations tend to establish.

Gilgal is the "rolling away" of the reproach of Egypt,—that is, of the bondage there—bondage to sin, and toward this the way of Debir turns. The oracle which enlightens as to the cause of the trouble points us to the deliverance from it already achieved, and which we have not again to reach but only to be reminded of; while our road lies on the south—the sunny?—side of the water-course (the stream of living water) up the ascent of Adummim (the "quieted ones"), —up, ever up, refreshed and rested, toward the end at hand.

(*5*) For now we reach the first halting place, and we may be certain that refreshment is abundant there. So it is: we end now with two springs, in the beautiful language of Scripture, "*eyes*," in the purity and abundance of which God's eye, as it were, looks out at you, and you are reminded, as was Hagar at Beer-lahai-roi, of the "Living One who seeth." *Two* springs: the one Enshemesh, the fountain of the sun, because the sun is ever shining on it; the second, Enrogel, the fuller's fountain, where our garments are made white.

We have finished our journey now as pilgrims: we are on the top of the ascent, and the city of the great King, Jerusalem, is right before us. "Our feet stand within thy gates, Jerusalem." All this road speaks, then, of what we have as

* Prescribed indeed in Exod. xxix. 20, as to the priests, but only carried out in Lev. viii.

ward, which is at the end of the valley of [v]Rephaim northward; and the border was drawn from the top of the mountain to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, [v] 2 Sam. 5. 18.

the material of worship. Can even "fruitful" Ephraim show such a road? Is not the pre-eminence of Judah demonstrated by it? Does it not all through speak of God, God, God? Here we have indeed our "songs of degrees" or "ascents:" every step is a song!

But here the second part of the border commences, and we have to follow it by a longer descent to the western sea.

It is after the first three stages an almost continuous descent, the interruptions being notable as such. It represents the continuous self-humbling so naturally suggested by the connection with Dan, which the apprehension of God induces in the soul, and which unites itself with and manifests the spirit of worship. Here too the difference is plain between Judah and Ephraim. The practical truth which Ephraim presents to us, necessary as it surely is, needs carefully to be guarded lest a spirit of self-complacency be nurtured by it. Ephraim must be kept in connection with Judah, and in dependence also, or he will slip into idolatry of the creature; and so the after-history testifies in the calf-worship at Bethel and Dan.

As before, the language employed marks out for us certain divisions,—here, eight in number; but we must go on to find the significance of this.

(*1*) "*And the border went up to the valley of the son of Hinnom, to the shoulder south of the Jebusite, that is Jerusalem.*" Is it not strange, that as it began with the salt sea below, so it now begins again, though at the summit of the ascent, with the picture of hell? for this without question the Gei-ben-Hinnom—Gehenna—is.

Here as the "valley" speaks of the place, the "son of Hinnom" must speak of the people destined to it; and here solemn it is to find that "Hinnom" means "gratuitous, causeless." "Son of Hinnom" in Hebrew, would mean a person characterized as that. He is gratuitously what he is: there is no cause for it outside himself. And so Scripture puts it as to the penalty of the lost: God willeth not the death of a sinner. As the Lord says, weeping over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

But there is a connection with the Jebusite, the "treader down,"—that is, with the city then possessed by them, afterward, as we are at once informed, Jerusalem, the "foundation of peace," which is righteousness. So that Gehenna is not the mere expression of power, as if Jebusite, but the execution of justice necessary for the establishment of peace (Is. xxxii. 17.) And here we may easily see that, though still going on with Benjamin, we are approaching Dan's border. This second part of the boundary-line leads us down the slope of humiliation, the needful humbling of man's pride; and this begins here with the recognition of divine righteousness in judgment,—yea, of the congruity with it of all divine attributes. The first part of the border beginning with the salt sea, with judgment also and man's lost condition, yet presented another truth in connection with it, the almightiness of the Deliverer. Thus they are distinct.

(*2*) "*And the border went up to the top of the mount which is in the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of Rephaim northward.*" The mountain is not named: we do not therefore need to know its name; but it divides between the judgment of the self-ruined (Hinnom) and the valley of Rephaim, "those who dissolve" people with terror. These giant races, the enemies of God's people, overthrow one, as it were, with the mere sight of them: they are types of the enemy's power, monsters, and, so to speak, superhuman. Are we not taught then by this mount of separation, (unnamed, because we are simply to think of it as this) to distinguish the judgment of sin from the mere effect of the enemy's power? As connected with the judgment of sin it is necessary to remember that no mere lack of strength, to resist a foe however strong, or

and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to [z]Baalah, that is Kirjath-jearim; and the border turned from Baalah seaward toward

[z] 1 Chron. 13. 5, 6. Jud. 18. 12.

circumstances, (may we not say?) however pressing, must be confounded with that which is the cause of divine judgment. Hinnom here is emphasized from another side of it therefore: human responsibility is fully enforced.

(*3*) "*And the border was drawn from the top of the mount to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron.*" *Nephtoah* means "opening," and reminds us of the rock opened in the wilderness, and of God's words by Isaiah, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys" (xli. 18.) If the riven rock be alluded to, we need not wonder at the abundance that is indicated, "the spring of the waters of Nephtoah," the symbol, as always, of that fullness of the Spirit which is ours as the result of Christ's death for us. And how important is this as the third step in the self-judgment of a Christian, that the fullness of the Spirit is really his? For then there can be manifestly no lack of power at any time, except what is due to lack of integrity or to lack of faith. A spring will fill a vessel and overflow it, except the vessel be filled with something else. And here the necessity and blessedness of self-judgment are pressed upon us. "*Be* filled with the Spirit," says the apostle: it is an exhortation,—a duty which belongs to us; not something which God would withhold, or has withheld, but which, if not ours, we are not sincere, or else not simple, in making it our own.

"*And it went out to the cities of Mount Ephron,*" which may as a compound word in Hebrew mean "a thrill"—or "quiver"—"of joy." Ecstacy is what the apostle associates with the fullness of the Spirit, as we see by his antithesis: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, *but* be filled with the Spirit." When they were all filled after this manner on the day of Pentecost, the people said, "These men are drunk with new wine." In some respects to be compared, yet how different! "If we be beside ourselves," says Paul again, "it is to God." And here the mount of rapture, of thrilling joy, in what significant company is it with the "spring of waters of Nephtoah!" But this is not something known merely in seclusion; there is a busy hum of life about it: cities—and the word used means places of busy concourse—cluster upon Mount Ephron; the activities of divine life go with the joy of the Spirit.

(*4*) "*And the border was drawn to Baalah, that is, Kirjath-Jearim.*" The number 4 is that which, from its being the first capable of true division, expresses weakness, and thus speaks of the creature, necessarily weak as such, and liable to failure. It is also the number of testing, which brings out failure, and of the practical walk in which it is displayed. These lines run into one another, and under this number we find in general these thoughts together, as we have seen in Moses' fourth book at large. From the third to the fourth of any series of this kind we expect generally a descent in character therefore, and are rarely mistaken. This makes it at first sight strange that at the fourth point of the border here we find nothing but the name of a city which seems to suggest other thoughts. Baalah means "mistress, possessor," the other name of which is Kirjath-Jearim, the "city of the woods." It is mainly noted in Israel's history as the place where the ark, after its return from the Philistines lay unhoused—of its proper house—and well nigh hidden, all the days of Saul. "At Ephratah we heard of it;" says David: "we found it in the fields of the wood." And from thence he brought it to Zion.

Baalah, though certainly meaning "mistress" in Hebrew, has been thought to mean "belonging to Baal;" and this seems supported by the fact that in the list of the cities of Judah (*v.* 60) it is given as Kirjath-Baal.—the "city of Baal." This *seems* as if it might set aside dispute; but one who has thought much on Scripture is slow to believe that there is in it any change without a meaning. That full inspiration, which we shall not here question, which we must leave the risk of questioning to those who dare to take it, surely requires

Mount Seir, and passed to the shoulder of Mount Jearim northward (that is Chesalon), and went down to [a]Beth-shemesh, and passed [b]Timnah; and the border

[a] 1Sam. 6.9.
[b] Gen. 38. 12–14. Jud. 14. 1.

us to believe as much as this; and we shall gain much by acting as if we believed it.

If Baalah be "mistress," it is at the same time a word little used in Scripture, and twice out of three times in ill connections, though *baal* the masculine form is freely enough used for "owner, master, husband." The "lady-" city is no strange conjunction of terms; and its import is easy enough; as that of queen-city, even in our own days.

Kirjath-Jearim, "city of the woods," does not seem readily to lend itself to interpretation in the way we seek. *Jaar*, "wood" primarily means "redundance, overflowing," and so a "thicket of trees," from the exuberance and luxuriance of vegetable life. But this in contrast with a fruitful field is used in Scripture as implying a useless prodigality (Is.xxxii. 15); and a city of woods or thickets would convey more strongly this thought of waste land *not* really barren but devoted to what was of little profit.

As connected with this it is used also as the symbol of pride doomed to destruction, to ax or fire, and thus it comes round to the thought contained in Baalah, a city of woods, and not of fruitful fields, barren of self-support, while it remains in haughty idleness, drawing from others what it does not repay,

So many of the lessons of Scripture have to do with pride, the great evil of man's fallen nature, by which in various ways and in very humble degrees of it, man would still be "as God;" can it be wondered that the number of failure and of creature-weakness is attached to it here? For weakness with us is strength, and strength is weakness: he that exalteth himself must be abased, while he that humbleth himself is exalted. And this is indeed one inveterate evil and cause of all failure, which, in this line we are upon, (drawing close now to Dan,) could not be omitted from the materials of self-judgment which are being furnished to us here. Ah, what spendthrift prodigality of human strength is there at the bidding of this Pharaoh, and how we toil to build pyramids, which when built are but sepulchres at last!

And after all Baalah and Baal-worship are but too closely united, so that Kirjath-Baal, as a synonym for Baalah can easily be understood. Baal is "lord," in that sense in which God disowns it for Himself. He will not be Baali, but Ishi, the title, not of mere authority, but of endeared relationship. (Hos. ii. 16.) Baal is force, power, and this is the god of pride, in the service of which it toils. How different the yoke of Him who, when He offers it to us, bids us "learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, that ye may find rest unto your souls"! (Matt. xi. 29.)

And now we reach the border of Dan—

(*5*) "*And the border turned from Baalah seaward toward Mount Seir, and passed to the shoulder of Mount Jearim northward, that is Chesalon; and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed by Timnah.*"

Now for the first time, as we come to Dan, it is noticed that the border turns *seaward*. It is the regular word for "west," and of course the general direction has been west all through, but now it is directly so, and we are called to observe it. Of the two tribes that lie side by side with Judah to the north, Benjamin lies toward the Jordan, Dan toward the sea, and these are their respective limits. The sea is also Judah's western border, the fourth in order on this account. It is the picture of man fallen, in his restlessness and barrenness, and chafing against all restraint. Yet it is that out of which the influence of heaven can draw up the fertilizing rain, as God's mercy draws from man's misery its opportunity to display itself. The very picture of trial is found in "those who go down to the sea in ships, who have their business in the great waters;" but "these men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep." (Ps. cvii.)

went out to the shoulder of Ekron northward; and the border was drawn to Shichron, and passed by Mount Baalah, and went out to Jabneel: and the border ended at the sea.

Trial is needed because of what we are, is adapted to our condition, and in it God's governmental ways are often most clearly seen.

The line passes then *seaward* from Baalah to Mount Seir. Evidently the repetition of the last named, Baalah, is meant to show how it governs the next part of the road: pride must be abased, yet the road does not at once descend; on the contrary we find a "mount;" but we are going seaward, (the way of trial) and the mount is "Seir," the "rugged." The name certainly has no pleasant suggestion for an Israelite, though of course not Esau's mount, but only like it. It suggests hostility as well as roughness; and though God "gave Mount Seir to Esau," it was as a gift suited to the man,—a rough abode for a rough person. After all, an Edomite might flourish where an Israelite would starve.

A mount was not necessarily of evil significance, as we know. Mount Zion is to be the joy of the whole earth. Israel's portion was largely mountain. Yet to humble the pride indicated by Baalah, a "rough mount" would be more suited than a valley. If we seek high things God may give them to make us realize that adversity may easily come in this shape. Thus Mount Seir is "seaward" from Baalah.

God's guidance is for blessing in all this; and thus now we find the line passing to the shoulder of another mount, not rugged but leafy, the "mount of woods;" which cannot but recall the "city of woods," which was the other name for Baalah itself. But there is no city here; it is as if passed away; and only the woods remain, a mountain of woods, not perhaps as rough as Seir, but hardly pleasantly suggestive yet. The city is gone, the hum of busy intercourse is exchanged for the loneliness in which we come so often to a better mind; and there before us are only the "woods"—the profitless prodigality of pride, emphasized as this last by being a mountain forest.

We are traveling *northward*, facing mysteries which we have to learn; and the token that they are being learnt is naturally in the interpretation here—"that is Chesalon:" only a slightly changed form of the last word in the sentence of the Psalmist upon those whose "inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever and their dwelling places unto all generations, and" who "call the lands after their own names. This their way" he says "is their *folly*." The word means "confidence" as well as folly, the folly of a false confidence. But here we are surely not to take it as the sentence passed by another, but by a soul upon itself. The "city" that should have remained is passed; its houses have *not* continued: there is not *Kirjath-Jearim*, but only Jearim. It is repentance wrought by God in the soul; in evidence of which the line *now runs downward;* there is self-humbling; and the next place that is reached is how different! It is Beth-shemesh, "*the abode of the sun.*"

For the sun dwells in the valleys; though the spiritual truth goes beyond the natural type. But in the valleys its influence is most felt, even naturally. Of the spiritual truth, "thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Is. lvii. 15.) Thus Beth-shemesh could not be reached but on the descent: how beautifully every turn of the line develops the meaning! how plainly the spiritual meaning governs all! Is there not in all this verbal inspiration? Surely no one who reverently examines it can longer question! But to proceed:—

"*And it went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed Timnah.*" Timnah means "apportionment," "what is measured out." A beautiful sign of true humbling and of one with whom the high and lofty One dwells, that he takes his portion now as measured out by Him and craves no more.

*d* (v. 12.) The west border: the sea (trial).

(*d*) And the [c] western border is the great sea and [its] coast. This is the border of the children of Judah round about, according to their families.

[c] Num. 34. 6.

(*6*) "*And the border went out to the shoulder of Ekron northward.*" Ekron seems to mean "rooting out;" and we have before met with it as a Philistine city. While the meaning of the word must of course be the same, its application, when Ekron became Israelite, would be naturally different. Ekron falls within Judah's boundary-line, and is named afterward as a city of Judah; yet it is given to Dan. If we are spiritually to apply it as the eradication of sin, it will indeed naturally fall to the latter as a necessary part of self-judgment; yet if Judah's "praise" be the "confession of Christ's name," His having suffered for sins is part of the confession, which Peter links for us with "ceasing from" them (1 Pet. iii. 18; iv. 1.) We must preserve this link with Judah, while we give Dan the city.

But what is meant by the eradication of sin? Not certainly the rooting out of the old nature, as some dream. The flesh lusts against the Spirit even in one who has the Spirit; and the remedy prescribed by the apostle is not, Root out the flesh, nor yet, Ask God to root it out, but "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil its lusts." (Gal. v. 16, 17.) It has been suggested by some, that the lusting of the flesh is only in such unspiritual men as the Galatians; but the apostle certainly had not a lower standard for such than for others. What kind of "eradication" then can one speak of? Well, the keeping one's garden clean of weeds, although one cannot destroy their germs out of the soil. We are not to be letting one kind alone, or even cultivating it while we root out others. And one may be so little skilled as not to know weeds from flowers. There the apostle's word comes in: "I *exercise myself* that I may have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." (Acts xxiv. 16.) This earnest and absolute unsparing dealing with all sin is what seems to be meant by Ekron here.

(*7*) Under the number seven we expect to hear of the completion of this line of thought; and so we do: "The border was drawn to Shicron," "satiation with drink," not necessarily in a bad sense. "*Drink abundantly*, O beloved" (in Cant. v. 1), is the same word. "*And passed Mount Baalah, and went out to Jabneel.*" Baalah we have had before, and the repetition cannot be without meaning. Kirjath-jearim, its other name, is similarly repeated as to the last part of it, becoming also *Mount* Jearim, as here we have *Mount* Baalah. We are surely intended to draw these comparisons. Baalah is here not a city of man's making, but something of God's making. It does not exalt itself, as before: it is exalted. Then notice the last name, Jabneel; it means, "*God* is the builder"—not man. How plain, if we put all this together, the lesson seems to be, that the exaltation which man misses, when seeking it for himself, God has for him in His own way, and satiates thus man's thirst to the full! "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." (Ps. xvii. 15.)

(*8*) Here the border ends at the sea,—somewhat disappointingly at first sight. And why the number 8, which would be suited enough to remind us of eternity, but what is its object here?

(*d*) The sea is the west border of Judah throughout,—the fourth border,—most suitably stamped thus with what speaks of trial. But those whom the sea tries, brought to their wits' end by it, and crying to Him in their trouble, find the wonderful works of God. The shore which is Judah's limit is that also which He has given the sea, and it cannot pass it, nor turn again to cover the earth. Every way trial ends in the demonstration of the power of God, and that He is for His people. At the sea, Jabneel, "God is the builder," proves itself in this barrier of sand, so slight as it appears, in fact so mighty. In this lesson these two lines unite. The sea is not to exist forever: in the new world there will be none; but it will abide in the voice from it which will eternally proclaim the glory of God in His mastery of all circumstances, whereby all things

3. (13-19.) The realization of the possession.

[3] And to [d]Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the children of Judah, according to the word of Jehovah to Joshua, the city of Arba the father of Anak, that is [e]Hebron. And Caleb dispossessed of it the [f]three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, who were born to Anak. And he went up thence to the inhabitants of [g]Debir, and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher. And Caleb said, [h]Whosoever

[d] ch. 14. 15.
[e] 2 Sam. 2. 1.
[f] Num. 13. 22.
[g] vers. 7, 49.
[h] Jud. 1. 12-15.

work together for good, whatever their character. All conflict and trial past we shall praise God for the sea, and it will abide for us, as apostles and prophets abide, in the work that they have accomplished for us. May not this be the meaning of the number 8, with which the last section closes?

(iii.) And now we return once more to Caleb, whose history is so interwoven with this delineation of Judah's possession as to show plainly its great importance for us in connection with the general lesson. Yet it has been supposed, from facts which will have to be considered in another place, that he was not himself by right of birth a member of the tribe. And this seems confirmed by what is said here, that he was given a portion among the children of Judah according to the word of the Lord, although this last may relate to what follows rather than to what precedes. Caleb seems to have been of Edomite stock, one of those believers from among the Gentiles, of whom we find many prominent examples in the history of God's people, and of whom our Lord might have uttered the words concerning the Roman centurion, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Alas, the faith found among those brought up in a certain familiarity with divine things that have only availed to deaden the wonder of them, is so apt to be dulled to the average as it were between faith and unfaith; lacking the individuality that appears in those of whom we think as having lesser advantage.

Of Caleb's conquest we have no details. To those with whom God is, what is all the banded strength of the sons of Anak? Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai are dispossessed, and Hebron is his own. The names of the three children of Anak are not easy to interpret, and one can only venture to suggest their significance. As Anakim, ("the long-necked") of whom it was said, "who can stand before the children of Anak?" they may well represent the different forms of the pride of heart from which God is far off, and which is therefore the most terrible hindrance to the believer's possession of Hebron, that is "communion." Sheshai, which means most probably "white," may in this way speak of self-righteousness, the pride of personal character; Ahiman, if we may take it with Fausset to mean, "who is my brother?" of the pride of station, birth, or worldly condition; Talmai, "my furrows," of the pride of work accomplished, of one's doings. This certainly might well represent the whole family of Anak. They all fall before whole-hearted Caleb; and they as surely will before every one like him.

Hebron is his own, but that is not his only possession. We hear at this point of another city which has already come before us, and of the meaning of which there is no question. Debir, we find, has had, like Hebron, its Canaanite name: it was Kirjath-sepher, the "city of the book;" and how striking it is that in Caleb's hands the city of the book becomes the place of a divine oracle! a written word merely is exchanged for a living Voice, the voice of Him who when the heart is right with Him, delights to draw near and speak to the heart of the worshiper. Is not Debir in fitting company with Hebron? is it not its rightful complement? For the Christian of course, the "oracle" is not divorced from the "book:" it neither displaces nor overrides it. Nay, the "living oracles" is the title of Scripture itself, which faith owns and finds true. God never sets aside His Word; but the Spirit of God works with it and energizes it that it may be this to us, giving us the full reality of the divine Presence. Alas! how few yet know this in the measure it should be known!

> smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, I will give him Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel took it, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb; and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And so it was, when she came, that she had moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted from the ass. And Caleb said unto her, What wouldst thou? And she said, Give me

It is not however Caleb himself who takes Debir, but Othniel, either his nephew, or a much younger brother, who gets, according to promise, Achsah Caleb's daughter for his wife. Achsah would seem to mean "anklet," as Othniel is said to be "lion of God." What follows, however, is full of significance. Achsah on coming to him had* urged him to ask of her father a field, and she had got it, but in a south land—dry and needy: she boldly therefore goes further, and begs her father to give her springs of water. He gives her abundantly: upper springs and lower springs.

But who cannot see that, if these be "living oracles," there must be something deeper here? If only history, it would not seem very remarkable or worthy of preservation: and yet it is actually singled out from the midst of things apparently much more important, for repetition in the book of Judges. What is there so noteworthy in a young woman asking of her father a field and water? Yet we are warned carefully against looking for "gospel" in it! No wonder, if this be the temper of even orthodox commentators, that the "higher critics" should be encouraged, and God's people should be starved.

If we will only remember that "all these things happened to them for types," and that we have thus in type our own portion before us, how fruitful indeed, and well worth of double emphasis, Achsah's story becomes. Would only that we had her eagerness after a good portion, with every requisite for its enjoyment! would that we might be bold also to add prayer to prayer, making one gift the argument for another, until we had blessing indeed! Here we may be permitted to lose sight even of the large-hearted Caleb, and to think of One who surely gives with His "whole heart." Suppose Achsah had argued, "My father has given me already what he wished to give. I must not desire too much, nor reproach him as if his gift were not good enough,"—what would she have done with her south land, and no water? And just so God often gives what He knows necessitates more, and delights in the faith that says, *not* "It is enough," but "It is *not* enough." Of course, we are speaking of spiritual gifts, although the principle is of wider application, if we are only near enough to God to apply it rightly. But *our* land—our portion with Him—*is* a "south land." It faces the sun, and we need the Sun: we never can have too much of it; precious things are put forth by the Sun: all we need is water, springs of water, living water; and Caleb's liberality in this respect is but the faint image of God's.

Our portion is *workable land:* it calls for diligence, for labor upon it; and it will repay labor richly too. Would that the people of God would realize this more! Ah, how it needs to be insisted upon, to be repeated, not once only, but continually. And thus the precious Word of God, by which alone our portion is made our own, how we should search it, dig into it, not be content to leave it so much to a special class to assert patent rights as its interpreters, while thankful for every right thought that any can contribute to us. But we must seek and use the water above all; for the south land is one of all lands most dependent; and we know how to ask believingly from Him who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.

Then there are "upper springs and lower springs,"—those that spring out of valleys as well as out of hills,—wonderful high levels with large outlook, and low places, as in the valley of humiliation, where the streams linger, and fruits corresponding to each plane. There are glorious heights where, far above all

*So I think it should be read, otherwise the connection is very difficult.

> a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land: give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

storms, we gaze into clear, transparent, measureless infinity. And there are sweet recesses where we are shut in and see little, but where still there is the same Presence and the same Voice: "breadth and length and depth and height" are with all their variety still filled with one uniting, unifying blessedness, "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge."

(iv.) We have now a detailed list of the cities of Judah, in which we are evidently not to think (or but secondarily,) of the people that filled them. They stand rather for localities, varied circumstances, conditions, *experiences*, in and through which God is known, and the worship of His people ascends to Him. It is thus, as I believe, they fill the fourth place here.

It is but a list of names, which seem indeed to have little for us, except as we find it in the meanings of the names themselves. The best of commentators find here nothing but topography, and can give nothing but criticisms upon the language and historical references. There is surely room, therefore, for another treatment of them, which, if it can in any tolerable way give them consistent spiritual meaning, will demonstrate itself as true interpretation. If it speak to us in coherent language,—if it bring us lessons of holy wisdom,—why should we doubt that there is *mind* behind it? and then whose mind can it be but that of Him whom all His works confess?

We dread imagination; yet God has given us imagination, and appeals to it. We may abuse it—truly: not a good gift but may be abused. Have we not as much cause to dread the unbelief that carries with it its badge of weary dullness and inanity, which, because it is unbelief, can never "see the glory of God"? Scripture is fuller of this than even our imagination can easily suggest; and indeed it is imagination (for unbelief has its own,) that we have to oppose here with Scripture,—Scripture which asserts for itself that it is *all* "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," so that we must suppose even a list of Israel's cities should be that. Let us see if, by God's goodness, we may discover this: let us seek, that we may find. And Christians should be able to discern the difference between the day-dreams of the visionary and the clear sight of faith. "I speak as to wise men," says the apostle; "judge ye what I say."

One may freely confess that the subject is a peculiarly difficult one. The names are often hard to interpret, and the vocabularies give a bewildering variety of meanings. They are often capable of very different ones, and the difficulty is increased by conjectural vagaries of critics, who are as much troubled with imagination as any poor allegorical interpreter needs to be.

But there are difficulties with the text also, and some mistakes seem undoubtedly to have crept into the copies. These we shall have occasion to notice as we come to them. Here, if any where in Scripture, they would naturally be found. The numerical symbolism should be of the greatest help here, as it is all through, a check upon mere fancy instead of a loose rein to it, which brings in, indeed, something of the certainty of mathematical science into interpretation. If any one imagines otherwise, let him try any list of names in an uninspired book, and see how he will succeed, with the help of the liveliest fancy, in finding in it the faintest resemblance to what we trust to show to be here.

(*a*) The cities are gathered in larger and smaller groups, and sometimes numbered. Here again is a help to true interpretation, a guard against a false one. We have separately the cities in the south, (the *Negeb*;) in the *Shephelah*, or lowland; in the hill-country; and in the wilderness. The south (or *Negeb*, not the usual term for the south quarter,) we have seen already to speak of a dry land, yet productive, if its one necessity be met—that of water. As facing Edom, and the more distant Egypt, it is a land peculiarly dependent upon the rain of

4. (20-63.) The cities,—the various experiences which furnish praise.

4 (*a*) This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:—The cities at the extremity of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the border of Edom, in the south:—

Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, and Kinah, and Di-

*a* (20-32.) In the south.

heaven. It was full of cities once, now shut up in desolation. As a needy land, it was well fitted to remind the dwellers in it of the divine Hand upon which they were dependent. It will be no wonder, then, if its cities preach specially to us of the power and work of God, as in fact they do; lying also more or less near to the southern border, the line of which we have followed throughout.

(*) The smaller divisions may be traced by the want of the usual conjunction, the first group in this way consisting of nine cities, which would again, according to the usual division of nine, fall into three threes. Thus already the structure is marked out for us before we have looked at a name, and we have a strict curb upon imagination. These are the numbers attached to the names and their divisions; if the symbolism of numbers is preserved here, then they will be justified by the significance throughout:—

1. { *1.* Kabzeel, *2.* Eder, *3.* Jagur; } 2. { *1.* Kinah, *2.* Dimonah, *3.* Adadah; } 3. { *1.* Kedesh, *2.* Hazor, *3.* Ithnan. }

We must take them up separately first, before we can see the meaning of this classification.

"Kabzeel" means "God gathers;" and the name of God (*El*) is that which speaks of *power*. A good thing for Israel to be reminded of, and a real foundation for a nation's praise. It affirms their unity as from God, the practical accomplishment of it as from His mighty hand. As a first thought, it is also a simple one, and numerically clear.

"Eder" is "flock," from a verb which according to Parkhurst means "to separate, sever, distribute:" "a flock of sheep or herd of kine, which are *separated* or *disposed* at the will of the herdsman." Such a flock too is Israel, to be distributed and disposed at the will of their Great Shepherd; and this is the natural sequence and supplement to the thought in "Kabzeel," in some sense antithetical also, as their numbers are.

"Jagur" means "he sojourns," the word used by the Psalmist for "abiding" in God's tabernacle. (Ps. xv. 1; lxi. 4.) The land of Israel was God's, and they were His guests—"strangers and sojourners with Me," He says. (Lev. xxv. 23.)

God's sovereignty shines in these three names, and is the thread that unites them together. He gathers them by His power, arranges and disposes of them in His wisdom, entertains them in sovereign goodness; and these are surely all materials for praise. These cities lie also near the border of Edom, and in a marked way characterize Israel as in opposition to the independence and profanity of Esau.

But if God is owned their Sovereign in the first three, He is seen no less as their Saviour in the second three; and this comes in natural as well as numerical order here. For "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Thus we have now—

Kinah, which, from *kanah*, may mean "purchase."

Dimonah, "sufficient numbering," the *terms* of the purchase: "He was numbered with the transgressors:" the full price paid.

Lastly, Adadah, which may most literally mean, "the prey has departed." For "therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong: because He hath poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

monah, and Adadah, and Kadesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan;
[t] 1 Sam. 23. 14. 1 Sam. 26. 2, etc. ver. 55.
[t] Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, and New Hazor, and Kerioth-hetzron, that [was] Hazor;

The third series suitably begins, as a Leviticus one, with Kedesh, the "sanctuary." It is Kadesh-barnea that is meant, and which we know was on the southern boundary; but "barnea," "the wanderer," is rejected, as unsuitable to what is here, and only the first part retained.

Hazor also, "an inclosure," is, with Kadesh, on the boundary; but—

Ithnan is a place which is only mentioned here, and means, apparently, "he shall spread himself abroad." Thus we have again easily connected thoughts: a sanctuary—a safe retreat; an inclosure—a hedge around; and yet that only keeps out evil, does not prevent extension and multiplication. These thoughts all connect with sanctification, but speak, as all do here, rather of work done for one that this may be, than of the internal work, except in some measure the last, which gives the result, and which, as the third name in a third series, naturally emphasizes more what is internal. Here, then, the first group of cities is completed: in it divine power manifests itself throughout.

(**) The second series has but five names, and is a simple one. Young gives the first, Ziph, as "place of refining," and this seems to agree well with the general thought of the series, and to characterize it. Humiliation and its results seem to be here spoken of, and this is a deeper necessity for us, and a matter for more abundant praise, than it is easy to believe. Yet if pride was that by which an angel became a devil, the sin which alone seems possible to one in all the created perfection which Ezekiel ascribes to him (Ezek. xxviii. 15, 17), one may not wonder if even as saints we have to be guarded in every possible way against it.

Telem, "oppression,"—a strange word amid the rest—seems thus, however, intelligible; and from God's hand it may come sweetened, though an enemy for enmity alone be the oppressor.

Bealoth, "on the ascent," comes suitably in the third place; for with God there is always a way out; and a way *out* is always a way *up*. Then comes, under the number of weakness,—

Hazor-hadattah, a "new inclosure," a fencing about still for safety, while relieved from the past distress; and then—

Kerioth-hetzron, "*cities* of inclosure," which is, after all, old Hazor with a new meaning. When the fencing round is found to be the folding about of the everlasting arms, and that is consciously fulfilled to the soul, "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Ps. xxxii. 7), then begins the stir of busy, fruitful life of which the "cities" speak.

All this is Judah's portion; and we have only looked at a little corner yet.

(***) With the third group, another nine, we come to what is strictly internal work—divine work in the soul;* a theme for praise indeed, as that which alone makes competent for praise. These nine divide once more (as nine seems always to do) into three threes:—

| 1. | 2. | 3. |
|---|---|---|
| *1.* Amam, | *1.* Hazar-gadda, | *1.* Hazar-shual, |
| *2.* Shema, | *2.* Heshmon, | *2.* Beersheba, |
| *3.* Moladah; | *3.* Beth-pelet; | *3.* Biziothiah. |

The first three begin with that with which all here must begin,—with new birth.

"Amam:" I take it to mean "their mother," and to refer to the common mother of us all. Eve fallen has involved in her fall all the children descended naturally from her: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li. 5.) With this truth, sad and humbling as it is,

* For full detail as to the nine names here, see my tract, "From Amam to Biziothiah."

Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, and Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and [j]Beth-pelet, and Hazar-shual, and [k]Beersheba, and Biziothiah;

[j] Neh. 11. 26.
[k] Gen. 21. 22–34. 1 Chron. 4. 27–31.

we must begin, or we cannot understand the necessity for new birth. Two words, which we must connect together in order to apprehend their force, give us now this very simply.

"Shema," "report," and—

"Moladah," "birth," thus easily convey to us the truth which Peter emphasizes,—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pet. i. 23.) "Faith cometh by a report, and the report by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17, *Gk.*) Here the first triad ends; the first stage of the journey is reached.

"Hazar-gaddah," an "inclosure of conflict" begins the next three. This is now the internal strife which is found after new birth,—"I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 23.) "Hazar," "inclosure," speaks, on the other hand, of the law of God, which while we are under it in conscience, holds us in for conflict. "The strength of *sin* is the law," though it condemns and urges us against it. This is the lesson of Pharaoh, Migdol, and the Sea, and which is acted out for us in that grand type. A new deliverance is needed, of which we have the method revealed in—

"Heshmon," "quiet reckoning." We do not conquer by fighting, but by faith: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vii. 25.) It is by learning our place before God in Christ, in full simplicity, and that God does not identify us with the evil in us, but with Him who by His cross has put it away, that we reach—

"Beth-pelet," "the house of escape," the sanctuary into which He has entered, and where He abides for us. How safe and complete a shelter! But it is in the third series that we find the full result. As in all three, the first of the triad is the most mysterious: it is—

"Hazar-shual," "the inclosure of the jackal"—"the jackal-pen." "Shual" is the word translated "foxes" in the common version, but for which, in general "jackal" is allowed to be better. Both are "burrowers," as the word means; but the jackal only is a carrion-feeder, as Ps. lxiii. 10, and gregarious, as Samson's exploit would imply. (Judg. xv. 4.) The two former habits, and the whole connection in which we find the word here, induce the belief that it is the symbol of the evil nature, the flesh, with its earthliness and its greed for corruption. This jackal-nature cannot be slain, moreover. It can be "*penned*," and thus practically "annulled," the real word in Rom. vi. 6, the fruit of faith in what the cross has done for us: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Faith indeed must *keep the pen*, even when deliverance is fully known; and so it is further written, "*Reckon* yourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus;" and "*Let not* sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." (*vv.* 11, 12.) The knowledge of deliverance, however, by a soul practically in the faith of it, *pens the jackal-nature.*

So we come to "Beersheba," "the well of the oath," or "of the seven," the number of lambs by which the well that he had dug was secured to Abraham. So to the delivered believer the well of water is secured by divine promise, founded on the perfection of what Christ is for God. All the fullness of the Spirit belongs to him, and yet not without the need of diligence on his part, as the *well* implies: not a free-flowing spring, though this is the suited symbol at other times, but the need recognized of maintaining access to these living waters. The numerical place dwells upon the office of the Spirit as a witness to Christ.

Lastly, we have "Biziothiah," which Young gives as "the house of Jah's

Baalah, and Iim, [and Ezem, and Eltolad,] and Chesil, [and Hormah, and [t]Ziklag,] and Madmannah, [t] 1Sam.27.6.

olives." It may be, more simply, "*among* Jah's olives;" but either yields a good sense. Not only is the believer granted access to the living water, he is himself a vessel of the Spirit, of which the oil of the olive is an undoubted symbol. The oil resides in the olive; and so the Psalmist: "But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever." (Ps. lii. 8.)

How beautifully do these names tell out, from first to last, the internal work in the soul of the saint! The exact numerical significance may be traced just as fully, Hazar-gaddah, as the *first* of the *second* series, speaking of the reign of law; and the series itself, of deliverance from the law; Hazar-shual, the first of the *third* series, of the dominion of the Spirit; and the series itself, of realized sanctification. What could be more entirely appropriate and more beautiful? The other numbers are easy.

(****) We come now to the fourth group of these cities of the south, and which ends the catalogue. Here we have in our Bibles thirteen names, a number of which as yet we have no knowledge. The two final names, indeed, "Ain and Rimmon," says Keil, "are given as Simeonite towns, and, being written without the copula, are treated as one name in chap. xix. 7 and 1 Chron. iv. 32, although they are *reckoned* as two separate towns in chap. xix. 7. But as they were also called 'En-Rimmon' after the captivity, and are given as one single place in Neh. xi. 29, they were probably so close together that in the course of time they grew into one." Some would reckon them, therefore, as one here; and if that could be done, the number would be 12, which, according to what seems as yet the constant law, would be divided as four threes. Trying to divide them thus, however, there seems not a ray of light as to their meaning.

The whole number of these cities of the Negeb is given in ver. 32 as twenty-nine—"twenty-nine cities and their villages." But there are, in fact, thirty-six names, and not twenty-nine; and commentators have in general, with Keil, taken this as a textual error, the Syriac version reading thirty-six, which would be right. However, the correction would be very easy to be made, and quite likely to be a critical emendation only, as Fay allows.

But another alternative has been adopted by other commentators; and Hollenbeck suggests that the additional names have been interpolated from Neh. xi. This is unlikely enough, for the books are too far apart in time. A more likely interpolation, if we must (as seems plain,) suppose error somewhere, would be from Simeon's cities, as given in chap. xix. The cities of Simeon, who was to be "scattered in Israel," were all given him in Judah's territory; and some of them have been actually thus already mentioned, as Moladah, Hazar-shual, and Beersheba,—names which assuredly we could not afford to lose out of the places which they occupy. Moreover, if we would blot out *all* Simeonite cities out of the list, there would be now a deficiency as before an excess. Blot them out, however, *out of this fourth part only*,* the number becomes exactly right—twenty-nine cities.

Moreover, looking at the list so altered, light begins at once to dawn on us. There are thus but six cities left, if we retain Baalah, which may indeed very probably be the Balah of Simeon, filling the right place in the list in the nineteenth chapter; but which, if so, is essentially altered in meaning as well as in spelling, so that we cannot reckon it as the same really. 6 is a more likely number than 12 in such a record as the present, approaching, and indeed going beyond, 4 in its significance of evil, and yet, as we know, speaking of it always as under the curb of divine power, and of final victory over it. While 12, though related to 4—as 4 x 3—contains the 4 as the earth-number, being manifest divine government over the earth. 4, in the present case, speaks rather of the

* They are bracketed in the text above.

and Sansannah, [and Lebaoth,] and Shilhim, [and Ain, and Rimmon:] all the cities twenty-nine, and their villages.

weakness and failure of the creature, which, taken in connection with the 6 of victory, a distinct meaning emerges at once for the whole series.

And here, first, "Baalah," "mistress," whose lesson we have already in another Baalah upon the northern boundary. Its clear right to its numerical place, and its indication of that pride that goeth before a fall are equally plain.

Then "Iim," the plural of "Ai," "heaps of ruins," gives the fall itself; not, I think, that outward fall which is often but the judgment upon the sin, leading, as in Peter's case, to self-judgment and recovery from it, but rather a simply spiritual collapse, which may be startling often in its rapidity.

Thirdly—the number of manifestation,—"Chesil," when applied to man, is invariably, in our Bible, translated "fool." It is a word we have met before in but a slightly altered form, (in connection too with Baalah,) as Chesalon, on the northern boundary; and there, as significant of folly in a special form, "the folly of a false confidence." This is what ever, indeed, deceives man to his fall, a false faith being as potent for evil as the true for good, and this faith being constantly *self*-confidence in some form. "Having no confidence in the flesh" means, for the Christian, power in the Spirit; and in this sense, "happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." (Prov. xxviii. 14.) Here is the divine interpretation of failure.

Fourthly, "Madmannah" gives the open downfall which brings man into his native weakness, and so to himself. Most give it, indeed, as "dung-hill;" but in Jer. xlviii. 2 there is a play upon the name, though of another place: "Thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen;" perhaps, "Thou shalt be leveled, O leveler;" where the *R. V.*, "Thou shalt be put to silence," seems to miss the connection. The Septuagint and Vulgate agree in rendering the word as "cart" of a threshing-floor (Is. xxv. 10); and such a figure would be quite appropriate here. God has to humble and bring down when we have stiffened ourselves against Him, though the wheat is only helped by the threshing, and even Satan's sieve He uses to accomplish this.

"Sansannah," "palm-cluster," then speaks of peaceable fruits of righteousness found by exercise under God's chastening hand. And—

"Shilhim," "armed" men, in the sixth place, which speaks of victory, may remind us of how experience of the past prepares for the future, and the weapons of the enemy taken from his hand may be used against him.

Thus, in view of failure also, we can praise our unfailing God. The furnace of trial is secured by covenant for us, and, if we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with sons. Here the enumeration of the cities of the Negeb ends, and the numerical structure, in the consistent exposition which it gives of the last portion, seems to prove the number 29 of the closing verse to be the true one, and therefore the interpolation of names from the Simeonite list, the order being also exactly similar in the two places.

(*b*) We come now to the cities of the lowland, a term which, though objected to by some, is only the simple rendering of "Shephelah." As a district, however, it includes both the Philistine plains and the low hills, and does not extend north of Carmel. In its designation it is already physically in agreement with the number attached to it. Whatever may be the connection, it seems to me, however, that *relationship* is what is pictured in the cities now before us; and here in the first place the need of new relations, because of the rupture of the old by sin. And these new relations, which are in and through Christ, meant for Him that wondrous humiliation which "shephelah" from "shaphel," to humble, would point out.

(*) The cities here are arranged in three larger groups; first, of which connection, fourteen names, "Gederah" and "Gederothaim" being only the singular

(*b*) In the lowland:—[m] Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah, and Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah and Enam, | [m] Jud.13.25. Jud. 16. 31.

and dual forms of the same word, and given as alternative names for the same place, and the connective "ve" being used for "or" as well as "and." Otherwise there would be fifteen cities, and the number given would be in disagreement with the facts, as some believe they are. But we are not at liberty to suppose changes in the text, when there is no absolute need of them, and there seems none here.

The arrangement of the names, as indicated by the presence or absence of the conjunction, is 5, 2, 2, 5, or thus:—

Eshtaol and Zoreah and Ashnah and Zanoah and Engannim;

Tappuah and Enam;

Jarmuth and Adullam;

Socoh and Azekah and Shaaraim and Adithaim and Gederah, or Gederothaim. And, first, "Eshtaol," a word, like many others, capable of diverse significations, means, if we may judge by the connection, "strong woman;" and this seems to lead us back, as in a previous group, to the beginning. "Strong woman" looks, indeed, like pure satire upon Eve, who fell at the first breath of temptation; yet, in fact she ventured upon her strength when the sense of weakness and insufficiency would have preserved her. Adam was not deceived, but she waited not for counsel from him to whom God had joined her. She acted in independence, and then proved her strength only to pull down her husband with her in her fall. Here, alas, she was strong enough, and how often since has this story repeated itself! Thus—

"Zoreah," "hornet," which derives its name from its virulent "stroke,"—a word closely related to that for leprosy, the well-known type of sin in its inward malignancy,—stands in ominous conjunction with this woman's strength. And this is what strength in man naturally connects itself with ever since, and the secret of overcoming still is, "When I am *weak*, then am I strong."

"Ashnah," next, may mean "returning," closely related to "shanah," "year," which is a revolution of the seasons, a circle returning into itself. And thus man's life has become but a brief cycle of development and decay, and the voice that called man from the dust, says, "Return, ye children of men." (Ps. xc. 3.) This is the seal divinely put upon man's condition, to manifest it to himself. His link with God is gone. The old relation is ended, and though man exists beyond death, it is naturally only in a state to which judgment has brought him.

But if man but accepts this judgment, there is mercy with God, and thus in the next place, under the number which speaks of weakness and of failure, "Zanoah" announces a "provision of rest." Not in the grave, thank God, but in restoration to Him. Then Paradise returns, and this the fifth name declares—

"En-gannim," a "fountain of gardens,"—Eden, as it were, multiplied, and watered by living water, with the vision of which the revelation of God closes; the next thing is perfection—"face to face."

Is it but the old relationship restored? No, blessed be God again, it is not. This the next two names, held fast to each other, tell us:—

"Tappuah and Enam," as the lexicons say, "an apple" and a "double spring."

Common thought is that the "apple" was the instrument of man's fall. Here, at least, an apple may disclose the mystery of man's recovery. The simplest things in nature are full of divine secrets. We miss them because we so little care to find them. The world has abundant treasures to pour out at the feet of him who is not of the world, and it will be good if we find in this place a lesson of this kind.

"Tappuah,"—whether "apple," "citron," "apricot," or whatever the learned may decide it to be,—is named in Hebrew from its fragrance: it means

Jarmuth and [n]Adullam, [o]Socoh and Azekah, and Shaaraim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, or Gederothaim: fourteen cities and their villages.

[n] 1 Sam. 22. 1.
[o] 1 Sam. 17. 6. 2 Chron. 11. 7. & 28. 18.

"breather," its emitted fragrance being called its "breath." But what then has this for us? Let us meditate upon it and see. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly unto them, that thy profiting may appear unto all."

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*, and man became a living soul."

This is figurative language also. All the deepest things are expressed to us in figures. God's inbreathing into man, never said to have been with the beasts, is that which implies the new and peculiar relationship between Him and this new creature of His making. Man is the offspring of God, and thus in his image. His spirit is from the "Father of spirits;" and the word which answers to this in Hebrew, as in our own language, is in fact identical with the word "breath." But God's breath, what is it? Common air? And man's spirit, what is it? That which is in constant influx and reflux,—never at a stay? This rubbish of materialism the devil must laugh over, when he sees the flimsy structures men can build with it. No, this breath of God is man's true, personal, and eternal essence,—spirit from the Spirit, and "what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" It is the permanent difference which exists between himself and every other being that exists upon the earth.

But the relationship which is here with God can only abide aright as man abides in moral likeness also. This the Lord affirms to the Jews, who claimed God for their Father. (Jno. viii. 42.) The competency for the place is lost by moral insolvency, and God must again come in by salvation and quickening from the dead, that men may be restored. Thus, again, having recourse to the figures by which God is pleased to communicate so often His deep things to us, the Lord, in the midst of His disciples, on the day of His resurrection from the dead, "*breathed on them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (Jno. xx. 22.) As "last Adam" now, in contrast with the first, who as breathed *upon*, became a living soul, *He* is a "quickening Spirit." (1 Cor. xv. 45.) A new life from God in Christ brings His people into new and better relationship, and Christ is the Inspirer,—"Breather," "Tappuah," of whom the spouse may indeed say, "His mouth is most sweet." (Song v. 16.,) Here, indeed, is fragrance from God and for God Himself.

And then we have "Enam," "a double spring,"—living waters. "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the *Holy Ghost*." Here is surely the spring,—yea, the "double spring,"—for such was the pentecostal gift. It was not merely what all saints had enjoyed from the beginning, but a double portion and more, transcending that: but I cannot dwell upon it now. Thus does the new life attain its fullness for us.

From resurrection to ascension is the natural progress of thought, and we must remember that we do not lose Him from the place of representative which he took for us upon the cross, when we follow Him back to his eternal home in glory. He is gone "to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 24.) Thus the two names bound together next can present no difficulty. We have, first—

"Jarmuth," "elevation," "exaltation," a name with which we are already familiar, if not in this application; and then—

"Adullam," the most literal rendering of which word would seem undoubtedly to be "in very deed a witness." How simply applicable to Him who has gone in for men as Man, the testimony to the value of His completed work and of the acceptance therefore of His people! Our relation to God is characterized for us on the one side by the new life we have in Him, and on the other by the heavens opened and furnished by His presence there.

Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-Gad, and Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel, [p] Lachish, and Bozkath, and [p] 2 Kings 18. 14–18.

The fourth group of five names is less plain as to the detail, though its *general* significance is surely warning,—so far as we have gone yet, the one exception of this kind we have found among the themes with which Judah's cities engage us. We have here—

First, "Socoh:" either "his hedge," or, as in Lam. ii. 6, "his tabernacle," and then—

"Azekah," "fencing round," or, as more generally taken, "breach," two nearly opposite thoughts. But "his hedge" with "fencing round," would seem mere tautology, and "his tabernacle," if it be applied to God, would seem to make the idea of being broken through less probable. Would not the thought be that God having thus, as all that goes before has shown, drawn near to men, He must "fence round" this grace from rash intrusion? To *treat* grace as grace is none. This glorifies God, and is His way of blessing for us. All may come freely who will come through Christ; but how many would draw near Cain-like without the shelter of the blood? Thus He Himself reminds us of the "strait gate" and the "wide," the "narrow way" and the "broad," and of these the next two names surely strikingly bear testimony:—

"Shaaraim," "two gates," and—

"Adithaim," "two ways!"

The fifth name, "Gederah," with its apparent variation merely, "Gederothaim," is again more difficult. The word means a wall or enclosure, generally, at least, of stone, such as was used often at night for the protection of sheep,—"a sheep-fold," or "two sheep-folds." The numerical place seems to speak of the end of the way and the dual form of the final word to carry the previous alternatives to their conclusion. The word is not always an enclosure *for sheep*, and there may be intentional ambiguity, significant as that. This seems not difficult to understand. But why the first "Gederah?" May it be that divine love would have but *one* enclosure—one happy fold at last, but that man's way necessitates two, how different? This is only a suggestion; but it is at least a sweet while solemn thought with which to end the series. God is calling men, whose old relationship to Him sin has broken, to new relationship with Him in a higher way. Man's will is, alas, a terrible factor in the final result; and, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," are words that apply yet even to multitudes that are professedly Christ's own people.

(**) The second series of the cities of the Shephelah, sixteen in number, seems to represent the *service* implied in relationship, as the first series has shown us the *ground* of it. All relationship, of necessity, supposes *duty* as flowing from it, and that on both sides, and as various as are the aspects of the relationship itself. It is only as we come to look at the names that we shall be able to see just what the Lord has chosen to bring before us here.

There are three groups, of six, seven, and three names respectively:—

Zenan, Hadasha, Migdal-gad, Dilean, Mizpeh, Joktheel;

Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, Cabbon, Lahmam, Kithlish, Gederoth;

Beth-dagon, Naamah, Makkedah.

The place of each number in this is again definitely determined for us, and we have no choice at all about it. For this we may be very thankful, for even the significance of the names is at times quite difficult to make out, and then they are in their nature symbolical—true hieroglyphs, and we need all the help that can be obtained to read them.

"Zenan," the first of the first group, signifies "sheep," or "a place of sheep." We are in a part of the land, and among names which remind us of these, as "Gederah" and "Gederothaim" in the first series, and another "Gederoth" further on in the present one. Standing where it does—at the head of the series,

Eglon, and Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Chithlish, and Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and [q]Makkedah: | q ch. 10. 28.

it would naturally suggest to us a relation of His people to their Lord, which He Himself emphasized strongly. As the "good Shepherd," He laid down His life for the sheep: as the "great Shepherd" "brought again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," He guides them now. On their part the terms suppose docility and obedience, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." We have next—

"Hadashah," "new," where the only difficulty can be as to what it refers to. "Other sheep I have," says the Lord again, "which are not of this" Jewish "fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock,"—not "fold,"—"one Shepherd." One flock of Jews and Gentiles together, outside the legal fold, kept together by the one authoritative voice they know and follow. To this the word may well apply.

"Migdal-gad," "tower of the troop," may also have reference to a flock. Such towers were built for its safety; for better watching against beasts or men; and with Micah the "tower of the flock" is "the stronghold of the daughter of Zion." (chap. iv. 8.) The exalted Lord, with all power His in heaven and in earth, thus cares for His people, and none can pluck them out of His hand.

Thus they are provided for. But the fourth name suggests quite different thoughts, and yet in complete accordance with the number. "Dilean" signifies, as I believe, "weak with humbling," and brings back to our thoughts once more the condition in itself so healthful for us, yet to which we have often to be brought by such painful discipline. The sheep is naturally weak and defenseless enough, and no further image should be needed to convey such a thought to us; but we know well that we have to be reminded of and made to realize this condition, that we may be content to remain in the place of dependence, and follow without straying from the Great Shepherd.

Of this, I think, the next word, "Mizpeh," the "watch-tower," is intended to remind us. It comes in the fifth place, under the number of responsibility, and is surely not meant to repeat the thought of Migdal. The words of the Psalmist rather give the meaning, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will *watch*." (Ps. v. 3;) or, those of the Prophet, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." (Hab. ii. 1.)

This watching is indeed the product of "Migdal" and "Dilean" together, as we may say,—of the apprehension of our weakness and of His wise and holy guardianship and guidance: "Behold, as the eyes of a servant look unto the hand of his master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." And how, indeed, apart from this attitude, can we be guided by *His* eye?

But it is to this we must be brought, and then will "Joktheel," "subdued by God," celebrate His love-triumph over us. Note that this is the sixth place we have reached, the number of victory, but the victory is His if the fruit is ours. Moulded to His will, brought into the attitude of habitual dependence upon Himself, what more can be wanting to us? And He, too, sees in us the fruit of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

Thus, what we have in this first group is the Shepherd's service to the sheep; it is the fruit of this relationship in which He is to us. The second group has seven names, and begins on our side with—

"Lachish," which we have already twice over looked at, as signifying, "Walk as men;" not here of course in the carnal sense in which the apostle reproves it in the Corinthians, but as we have seen to be the meaning when the city becomes Israelite, "Walk as *the* man;" or, "Walk in Christ." The Second Man alone is man after God's own thought, and we are to "walk as *He* walked,"—a

sixteen cities and their villages.
[r] Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan, and Jiphtah, and

[r] 2 Ki. 8. 22. 2 Ki. 19. 8. 2 Ki. 23. 31.

heavenly man in the world. This alone is Christian obedience, too sadly forgotten, but of which the numerical place bears witness. The next name gives the character of this walk, as—

"Bozkath," "in being poured out." "Yea," says the apostle, "and if I be *poured out* upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." (Phil. ii. 17, *marg.*) "Poured out" is the word,—as a drink-offering; and the drink-offering *meant* joy; but it was, of course, as all offerings, an offering to God, not man. And this was the principle of Christ's life, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. xii. 2.)

The "Eglon" which we have before met comes in beautifully here. It is the wheel of man's destiny, but, as the third place shows, in the chariot of Deity; and as such it has nothing but good for the man of God. It is ordained for the abasement of man's pride, and writes vanity upon the world; but only as unbelief and pride refuse the judgment upon man as fallen, and shut themselves out from the revelation of the grace beyond. Faith, humbling itself before God, accepts the lesson, and finds God in it. The law of sacrifice consents to the losing life in this world as the way of keeping it to life eternal. And he to whom Christ's footsteps mark the road of his choice, realizes the very darkness and difficulty and need of the way as being like the wilderness, for Israel only the occasion for divine glory to manifest itself, and where faith too, as precious to God, is trained and exercised. The wheel of God's providence moves forward to the accomplishment of holy purposes, breaking up the stubble and sifting the wheat from the chaff: where all seems most confusion, God's granary garners most the precious grain.

And this may be the connection with the following word, "Cabbon," which seems to be "as one that understands,"—that, Christ's spirit received into the the life, and the enigma of the world solved, the discipline of its government accepted, men become really those that understand. Faith is not credulity, though to the "fool" it may appear so: it is the opening of all secrets, and the fitting practically for every position and function of life. And thus "wisdom" in Scripture has always a distinct and inseparable relation to godliness; there is not even the *beginning* of it without "the fear of the Lord."

Moreover, as it owns God, so it regards man: fellowship with Him who is Love must be love too: it is "in" godliness that is developed brotherly love, and "in" brotherly love, a love still wider. So Peter's words (2 Pet. i. 7.) really intimate. If Christ has found the door of the heart, He keeps it open, as His own is. And thus we find in the two names succeeding the fruit of a life devoted to God for others—

"Lahmam," "*their* bread;" the ministry, we may conclude, to the inward need of man, bread being the type of all other subsistence; while—

"Chithlish," "the beating down of the lion," speaks of other need, in deliverance from him who as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour;—

"Gederoth," again, closing the record here with a vision of securely folded sheep, preserved and rescued.

Thus the service of relationship is illustrated from the merely human side. Three names now seal the blessedness of all this:—

"Beth-dagon," "house of the fish," the last in Hebrew named from its fecundity. This in the fish is marvelous: and who shall tell the fruitfulness of a life given to God in accordance with His will? The numerical place would emphasize it, I think, as *obedience*,—no supererogatory work; nor left for the Christian either to carry out or not as he pleases. God has various places for us to fill indeed, and many members in the one body of Christ; but He has no different *grades* of that one life of which Christ is the measure always. What is short of this is only *sin*.

Ashnah, and Nezib, and [s]Keilah, and [t]Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities and their villages.

[s] 1 Sam. 23. 1-5.
[t] Mic. 1. 14, 15.

As the name recalls, Dagon was the Canaanite and Philistine fish-god; and to this day such as these represent worship *fish*, that is, a fruitful life: but Beth-dagon in Israelite hands was, of course, no more idolatrous. The light must "shine before men:" Christ must be testified to, that is, as the One who is the only true light; and thus, says the Lord, "they shall see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven." (Mat. v. 16.)

"Naamah," the second name, tells that this life is "pleasant." Such it is, as has been often testified even by those that have persecuted to the death those that lived it. Stephen's face, to all that looked upon it, shone like that of an angel. Yet they battered the glory out with stones.

Lastly, "Makkedah," "bowing the head," speaks of that subjection to God which glorifies Him, as making Him God indeed, and testifying how our hearts have been recalled to Him. This completes the blessedness.

(***) The third series of the Shephelah, emphasizes its number in the *nine* cities it contains, which are, according to what has proved hitherto the constant rule, a three by three. We should not be surprised to find, what is the fact, that they lead us into the sanctuary, and give us in one aspect of it, our relation to the Lord *there*. The first three speak plainly of His work as typified in what the apostle calls "the first tabernacle," the outer holy place; the second three of His entrance into the second, the inner one; the third, of our own realization of blessing in it. The lesson is from Hebrews throughout.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | *1.* Libnah, | 2. | *1.* Jiphtah, | 3. | *1.* Keilah, |
| | *2.* Ether, | | *2.* Ashnah, | | *2.* Achzib, |
| | *3.* Ashan; | | *3.* Nezib; | | *3.* Mareshah. |

The place and number of every name are thus rigorously determined for us as before.

Libnah we are again familiar with: it means "white," and represents "purity." Moreover, in our former glance at it, we considered it to represent especially *separation from evil*. We shall now see how perfectly all this unites in the present application.

The high priest in Israel went into the sanctuary, not in the garments of glory and beauty, in which he appeared before the people, but in simple white linen garments only. All depends, as to him who draws near to God, upon the absolute purity of what we have seen the garments to represent, the personal ways—the *habits*. The unblemished victim spoke in another way of the same truth. Christ on the cross when heard by "Him who was able to save Him" —not "from," but—"*out of* death, was heard for His *piety*" (Heb. v. 7. *margin.*) He was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," (Rom. vi. 4,) God not suffering "His Holy One"—or rather "His Pious One," and thus in strict unity with Hebrews—"to see corruption." (Acts ii. 27.) The plain white garments of the high priest taught the same obvious but solemn truth.

But Libnah gives us an additional thought, which Hebrews exactly interprets: "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate from sinners*, and made higher than the heavens." (chap. vii. 26.) As the high priest's intercession in Israel was upon the ground of sacrifice, and for a (typically) redeemed people, so the Lord in heaven is for those of whom it is said, "By one offering, He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (x. 14.) Of these He is now the Intercessor on high: "I pray for them," He says Himself; "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are thine" (Jno. xvii. 9.) While the atonement is for all, in this sense, that all men are welcome, and besought to avail themselves of its full provision for them, His intercession in heaven is for His own, and Libnah presents the precise truth as to the High-priest in the Sanctuary. How absolutely perfect is the Word of God!

"Ekron and its dependencies and its villages. From Ekron and toward the sea, all that are by the side of [u] 1 Sam. 5. 1-10.

Ether follows Libnah, and is generally interpreted as "riches, abundance." There is a form in Scripture *athereth*, which means this: it occurs but once, while *Athar* in the simple form, occurs once as "thick" (Ezek. viii. 11) "a *thick* cloud of incense went up." The R. V., with the Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac, translates here "the *odour* of the cloud." Hengstenberg objects to this however, as "a meaning that rests on no ground whatever." He translates, "And the *prayer* of the cloud of incense went up," and adds, "The cloud of incense is called 'prayer,' because it was an embodied prayer." The same word is translated "suppliant" in Zeph. iii. 10; and the verbal root (*Athar*) is commonly used for "intreat, pray." Wilson defines *athar*, "to pray as a suppliant, to supplicate God, powerfully, abundantly, or successfully; being generally used in *Niphal* of intreaty that prevails with God." Surely this is what the word means in this connection, found as such in exactly the right place, and being exactly the right word to express the prevailing intercession of the Lord.

Ashan, "smoke," reminds us of the "incense" which we find in Revelation added to the prayers of the saints, and which typifies the fragrance of Christ's own acceptability with which He makes them a sweet savor to God.

Thus all here speaks of the sanctuary; and the incense-altar stood in the outer sanctuary, or what the apostle calls the *first* tabernacle. (Heb. ix. 2, 6, 8.) This remained through the whole legal dispensation separated by the vail from the holiest of all, in which was the mercy-seat and where the glory of God appeared. Only once a year, covered with the cloud of incense and to put the blood of propitiation before God, the high priest went in for a moment within the vail. The law which could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper could not therefore bring near to God: and this the intervening vail declared.

In Christianity the true blood of atonement *does* perfect the conscience and brings nigh the worshiper; the first tabernacle, as distinct from the second, is done away: and that is what we go on to in the second three names; the first of which is—

Jiphtah, "he openeth!" The veil is rent by that which provides the precious blood for the mercy-seat. Atonement is accomplished, the work which He undertook is done; the Son of God is gone up where He was before: which the single word—

Ashnah, which we met among the cities of the Negeb, not the same city, but the same name with the same meaning, "return," declares as His own proper home. Therefore, in contrast with the high priest's merely momentary entrance—

Nezib, "station," comes to assure us that He has taken His place there, and abides where He has entered—the numerical place affirming that now we have the *realization* of what the Jewish ceremonial only shadowed.

Here the second three end with the Lord's place taken in the heavens; the third three now coming to give *us* the realization of what has been done for us:—

First, "Keilah," which from the Arabic is said to mean "castle" or "refuge." Thank God, this place in the innermost sanctuary is both for us. We are urged, as "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the vail, and having an high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 19-22.) Here, with such a welcome, we may well abide. What shaft of the enemy can reach us here?

We have also a witness of this place into which He is gone, and gone to appear in the presence of God for us:—

Achzib, is indeed generally considered to be the same as Chezib, and to mean "that which fails or deceives," as a winter torrent dried up by the heat of summer. And Micah (i. 14) is quoted for this, that "the houses of Achzib shall be

Ashdod, and their villages. Ashdod, its dependencies and its villages; Gaza, its dependencies and its villages,

(achzab) a lie unto the Kings of Israel." Yet the true meaning, and in perfect harmony with the prophet also, is almost the exact opposite of this. Taken as two words joined together, *ach zib* would be "a flowing indeed," such as the Holy Ghost as living water is, such as the "houses of Achzib," a mockery of their name, were not. It comes also in the *second* place, not the third, with perfect propriety, because the Spirit of God is looked at, as already said, as a witness of Christ's ascension and glory: "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath *shed forth* that which ye now see and hear" (Acts ii. 33.)

Thus a third word now closes the whole with the full conviction of what is implied for us as to the sanctuary into which Christ has entered—

Mareshah, "possession." Let it remain for us a living word, no theory, no dream: here let us abide, in the consciousness of what grace has made our own.

(****) From this to the Philistine cities of the plain! But the number gives us to know that we are descending here. Moreover the practical reality of sanctuary life has to be testified in the world; and we may not shrink from it. Of course, the Philistine cities as Judah's possession are no longer Philistine. Nor are they dwelt upon in much detail now. Indeed some commentators reputed orthodox believe in some omissions here, or else, that these verses are but a fragmentary addition by a later hand. I think, however, arguing from what is the fact, that every detail falls into its place, and the whole seems to be really complete in spiritual significance, that we have no reason for any such supposition. It gives the practical result of what precedes it.

There are five divisions here:—

1. Ekron and her dependencies and her villages.
2. From Ekron and toward the sea, all that are beside Ashdod and their villages.
3. Ashdod and her dependencies and her villages.
4. Gaza and her dependencies and her villages, unto the brook of Egypt.
5. The great sea and its coast.

All the names have already received their interpretation, and the numerical place of each division is clear; so that we have narrow limits, as narrow as may well be, for the imagination. In fact, all this narrowing only simplifies our work, while it proportionately more confirms the result arrived at: a manifest mark of divine truth in it.

1. Ekron then means "eradication." We looked at the truth conveyed when we were surveying the border of Judah, and need not at length repeat it here. The numerical place is simple: it may well show us what is implied in "integrity" with God, the uncompromising judgment of evil: not turning the blind eye to things that we would spare, but judging with God, by His Word, not our own opinions, all that He judges. This is indeed a first principle for a true life, and the order here may well be considered a divine one.

3. To make out the second division, it is clear we must first of all look at the third. Ashdod, we have interpreted to be "the spoiler;" and again it is not hard to see that the heavenly things revealed, if received in heart, rob the earthly of their glory. We cannot enter into the heavenly except as we leave behind the things of earth: "if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1–3.)

Thus Ashdod, as an Israelite city, clearly has its place under the resurrection number.

2. The second section is not so easy to interpret. It is simply characterized as places reaching from Ekron and the sea, alongside Ashdod. We may interpret it then as somewhat which takes its measurement from the "eradication" of evil

as far as the brook of Egypt, and the great sea, and its coast.

(c) And in the [v]mountainous country:—Shamir, and

[v] Luke 1.39.

and the paling of the world in the light of higher glory: and this, if we look at it in connection with the guidance of its numerical place, may well give us the thought of its being "growth" that is thus marked. Perhaps this is why we find no one city named also, because it is a thing so various in its manifestations, and so relative to other things—growth in this respect or in that. But it is of such great importance that we need not wonder to find a place reserved for it in such a catalogue as this. Growth characterizes life: even to meet daily wear and tear, there must be fresh production and renewal. And the life which is eternal, never reaching here its mature development, must surely *grow*. If any fresh knowledge be acquired, and it is by the truth that we are sanctified, must not this of itself necessitate it? Thus there seems full ground for believing that this is what is insisted on in this place, that a living soul must *grow*. While, if the lack of integrity and the sufferance of evil, with heart-occupation with the world, hinder this, then Ekron and the sea and Ashdod are of simple, easily read significance in connection with this.

4. In the fourth place—not first, as in the former list of Philistine cities, and for many reasons,—under the number which speaks to us of "weakness" also, it is no more strange, but most appropriate, to find Gaza, "*strength*." The connection and order are (as always) most important to observe. Such things can be little dwelt upon here, but those who study Scripture with practical intent cannot afford to pass over what is indicated in them.

5. Lastly, the sea and the sea-board, with their well-known meaning, and under the number that speaks of "exercise," fall also into Judah's portion. "Those that go down to the sea in ships," and learn there the wonders of the Lord, must not be lacking among Judah's worshipers.

Here the list of the Shephelah cities closes; and we go on to the cities of the mountain region. Shall we find the truth mount also, as we proceed?

(c) The cities of the mountain we may well suppose, from their position alone, to lift us up nearer to heaven and to God. The third place in which they come would confirm this, and suggest that they speak of the manifestation and glory of God Himself, although not as if apart from the blessing of His people: the names engraven upon the high-priest's breast-plate would be alone enough to assure us that this could not be. "In the ages to come, He," will "show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." And this verse from Ephesians, the New Testament Joshua, we might expect to characterize in an especial way the section of the book which we have reached now.

There are five series of these cities according to our common Bibles, to which Keil would add from the Septuagint a sixth. This question we must consider in its place. The first series here consists of eleven cities. No groups are marked for us in this eleven; nor do we know as yet of any recognized Scripture way of dividing this, though no number so large as this would seem to be without it. We are left therefore to what the names in connection with the numbers themselves may indicate; and in this way there seems to be two groups of six and five respectively. The first seems to speak of *God* as manifested in the counsels of His grace, the second of the response of man to this manifestation.

The first group then consists of—

"Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, and Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which is Debir, and Anab."

Shamir is a word which, in the book of Isaiah, is translated "briar;" elsewhere, in three places "adamant" or "diamond." In either case the derivation is from *shamar*, to "preserve," and in the latter case, if not the former, implies "hardness" and thus "durability." In this sense, and especially as

Jattir, and Socoh, and Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, that is Debir, and Anab, and [w]Eshtemoh, and Anim, [w] 1 Sam. 30. 26-31.

standing for a durable precious stone, it fills undeniably its place in this series. It would speak thus of the unchangeability of God's attributes, which His counsels proclaim to us, the first necessity for the conception of God at all. Without caprice or uncertainty in His own nature, so also nothing from without can thwart His will or introduce confusion into His perfect ways. He is the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning;" and as such the first of these mountain cities represents Him.

Jattir is an intensive form of the verb *jathar*, to "exceed, go beyond, excel." We must translate it, "He far excels;" and this would suit exactly the numerical place in which we find it. God goes beyond all knowledge and all thought. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." And this also is necessary to our conception of God. He would not be that if we could compass Him in our thoughts. But that inscrutability which of necessity belongs to Him, while it affords room for faith, is not and cannot be aught but His perfection. We do not say even any more that He dwells in darkness: He dwelleth in the *light* inaccessible, One whom no man has seen or can see; not because there is obstruction to the sight, but because there is infinity before it. Hence alone come our difficulties; and therefore the humbler we are the less we have. The Cross presents and removes them; we see what darkness is, and it passes from us; we are "in the light, as God is in the light."

The third name we are familiar with, and that it is in its place cannot be questioned; it is Socoh, "His tabernacle." The word implies that He has come forth out of His eternity into man's *time*, and become with him a traveler. It is literally "His booth," a light temporary structure, put up for the care of a garden or vineyard, suggesting thus the object of this amazing condescension, those "delights with the sons of men," of which Christ is at the same time the expression and the justification. Hence in the fourth place here we have—

Dannah, a word not elsewhere found in Hebrew, but from the Arabic would mean, "pressed down," a meaning perfectly suited to its numerical place, but strange at first sight in connection with the display of God. Yet our hearts understand well the mystery of love which could constrain a divine being to take the creature place which this *Dannah*, found under this number four, the number of the creature, indicates.

Then we have in the fifth place, Kirjath-sannah, which we are told is Debir, evidently, from its position, the same Debir that we have already more than once met, and which was also called Kirjath-sepher. Kirjath-sannah, means "the city of instruction," and is thus allied in its significance to the former name; while Debir, the "oracle," and in this fifth place in which God and man meet together, repeats for us the assurance that it is God Himself who has become our teacher. "*God* has spoken to us in [the] Son," says the apostle (Heb. i. 2:) "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He, hath told Him out." (Jno. i. 18, *Greek.*)

Thus Socoh, Dannah, Debir, agree in their testimony, proclaiming the fullness of the grace that has visited us; and now in connection with these, and in the sixth place, a number that speaks of victory over sin, we have Anab, "He has bound together." This ought not to be difficult: it signifies the Mediator's work complete, the triumph of divine love achieved. This closes the series on the Godward side.

The human response we find now in five cities more,—

"And Eshtemoh, and Anim, and Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh."

First, for there is absolutely no result as yet, where the spirit of it is not found, Eshtemoh, "obedience."

Secondly, Anim, which interpreters take as a contracted form of Enim, "springs;" but this suits neither the numerical place nor the connection. A

and Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities and their villages.
Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean, and Janum, and

better rendering, and one which agrees with both of these, is that of "responsive songs," the joy of man's heart echoing the joy of God's.

Thirdly, we have Goshen, "drawing near."

Fourthly, Holon, which is by some rendered "sandy," from *hol*, "sand." But the latter part of the word may well be a separate one, and the whole a compound, *hol-lon*, with the middle letters become one. The meaning then would be "lodging for the night upon the sand," and this in beautiful appropriateness to the wilderness-number, and to the connection, which the—

Fifth word, Giloh, "removing," strikingly confirms. Drawn near to God, the heart becomes that of a stranger here, of one who tarries but the night in the wilderness, and for whom there is to be "removal" in the morning; the number is that in which man is seen with God, and the desire in departure is fulfilled! How the numbers certify and fill up the meaning at every point!

Thus the first series of the cities of the mountains ends. The second has nine names which are once more a three by three. They lead us evidently beyond the present world and uncover the secrets of the state of the dead, who "sleep in Jesus." It is a wonderful picture of what was little known indeed in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament is clearly revealed. Yet not even the New Testament itself would seem to go further than what we find here in the heart of the Old! The names are—

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | *1.* Arab,<br>*2.* Dumah,<br>*3.* Eshean; | 2. | *1.* Janum,<br>*2.* Beth-tappuah,<br>*3.* Aphekah; | 3. | *1.* Humtah.<br>*2.* Kirjath-arba or Hebron,<br>*3.* Zior. |

Of these three groups, the first connects man with the body, though giving Christian hope as to the body itself; the second unveils hades, and shows us where the unclothed spirit is found; the third reveals in connection with this its internal condition.

The first word, Arab, means "a place of lying in wait." Generally used for the ambush of an enemy, the character of hostility is not necessarily in it. It is a place of hiding in expectancy; and such is the grave for the redeemed of the Lord.

The second word, Dumah, "silence," adds another character obvious enough. It, too, often implies expectancy, as where it is said, "It is good that a man should both hope and *quietly wait* for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam. iii. 26,) this word is used for "quiet expectancy."

The third word, Eshean, means "bed" or "couch;" and here the sleep is plainly temporary. Put these three words together, and there can be no doubt of what is referred to.

The second group carries us further: here the first name—

Janum, "he slumbereth," assures us that the sleep is only partial. It is the exact force of the word, though when applied to what is here before us, we must remember that this partial sleep is to be divided in this way, that as it is complete for the body, so it does not exist at all for the spirit or soul. Scripture never applies the term to these. Certainly for him who but dozes life still exists, and this may be the significance of the numerical place, especially when we connect it with the next word—

Beth-tappuah, the meaning of which has been already dwelt upon; it is the "house of the Breather," the term which we have seen to designate Christ as the last Adam, the communicator of life, and that a higher than natural. Thus the departed saint not merely *exists:* he lives the life which is eternal, and where Christ is, in His own dwelling place. And this is his—

Aphekah, "fortress" or "strong place:" how safe from all possibility of

> Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah, and Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, that is Hebron and Zior: nine cities and their villages.

harm, with Christ, where He is: "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

We go on now more deeply into the internal state, beginning with—

Humtah, the only word akin to which in the Bible seems to be *homet*, a word once used (Lev. xi. 30) to indicate a "lizard," in the common version "a snail." The verb from which it is derived exists in the Chaldee, with the meaning, "to bow down, prostrate," and this therefore we seem to be compelled to take as the significance here—"prostrate."

For the man departed, even to be with Christ, death, as that which deprives him of the companionship of the body, would seem to argue the end in the meanwhile of such activity as the body enables for. The separate state, as such, is necessarily an imperfect one. Resurrection alone can give the full powers of manhood, of course for the first time in their absolute perfection. The word here seems as if it meant to admit the prostration of strength in this respect, while in full view of it, rendered only more emphatic by the acknowledgment, there is the maintenance of the condition as being one of communion, as in the next name, so familiar to us as it is,—

Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron. And may not the introduction of the first name here, the Anakite name, be meant to remind us that, if death be the humbling of all human pride, that which is of God shall be more helped than hindered by it?

To be with Christ means nothing short of perfected communion, death smiting down for the Christian all foes that would keep us out of it. Yet, just because it *is* perfected, and because Christ Himself waits for His full joy yet, so the condition of the soul is still that which the last word here implies—

Zior, again a compound word, and which literally means "the ship of the watcher," the saint waiting still for the signal to be given to go forth, by Him upon whom his eyes are, and whose presence he will not leave when he goes forth in the beauty of resurrection to enjoy the inheritance of the co-heirs with Christ.

The third group contains ten cities in four smaller divisions:—

"Maon.

"Carmel, and Ziph, and Jutah, and Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah.

"Cain.

"Gibeah and Timnah."

What now does this third group bring before us? We most naturally expect perhaps that after this view of death and the separate state we should go on to resurrection and the heavenly condition. It would be strange indeed if these were omitted, and their omission would seem to cast a shade of uncertainty over the rest. While that is true, and we shall assuredly find them in their place, yet that place is not here, as we shall soon see. The numbers themselves seem to be against it: ten cities, four divisions, and the arrangement, 1. 6. 1. 2. Still this would not be decisive: the numbers, like notes in music, can play many tunes. But when we come to the meanings of the names, we have what is plainer. Such names as Ziph, "place of refining," Jezreel, "God sows," even Carmel, "God's vineyard," carry our minds away from heaven, and forbid the thought of a condition suited to it. Carmel suggests at once *Israel* as being refered to; for Israel was of old God's vine, and though He has for the present given it up, a day comes in which He will "sing unto her, a vineyard of red wine: I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. xxvii. 2, 3.) When seen as a picture of Israel as restored to God, risen as a nation from the dead according to the common fig-

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|---|---|
| *Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Jutah, and Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah, Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities and their villages. | x 1 Sam. 25. 2, etc. |

ure in prophecy, all becomes easy, and the difficulties make not a discord but a harmony.

The first name stands here by itself, and indicates the character of what is before us. It is Maon, "dwelling-place," which in this first place and with this emphasis, naturally speaks of God dwelling in the midst of His people, which when it shall be again a reality for Israel, will be the seal of their perpetual blessing. Then will be fulfilled the prophetic word, that "the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation: this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.) No wonder if this stand by itself as Israel's special portion. It is the fore-taste of that which, in a wider and fuller meaning, is said of the new earth at last, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." (Rev. xxi. 3.).

The next section shows in its six names, His triumph in their salvation. First, Carmel, from a word which means to "prune," implies what is ever the need of a vineyard, if it is to bear proper fruit. God's long labor of centuries cannot be at last in vain. Israel will yet answer to His work upon it, and "the excellency of Carmel" shall once more be spoken of and with a fuller emphasis. But for this there is to be yet severer trial than they have known, and of which—

Ziph, "place of refining," is the assurance to us. Out of this they come with—

Jutah, "enlargement," their borders stretched out, and with corresponding spiritual increase. Thus blessed, the fruit of their previous scattering will be seen in them, as—

Jezreel, "God will sow," affirms. "I will sow her to Me in the earth," He says in Hosea (chap. ii. 23) "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6.) Then we have their worship as they realize what God has wrought, in—

Jokdeam, "the people are made to bow the head," and thus reach—

Zanoah, "a provision of rest." Thus ends the second section.

The third is again a single name—

Kain, "acquisition." There is an article with it which makes it more emphatic: "*the* acquisition" so long delayed; the fulfilment at last of so many centuries of deferred hope. No wonder if God mark it as something of special importance. How much for His glory and man's blessing are summed up in it! "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" "God shall bless us," said one of old, "and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

The fourth section has but two names:—

Gibeah, "hill, height," and

Timnah, "apportionment;" for God's will is to put this light for Him, the testimony at once of His grace and holiness, upon a candlestick, and to exalt Israel, as the number indicates, upon the earth. God indeed has a special "hill" of which He has written, that "it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii. 2.)

Naturally, every way, we go on now from Israel's blessing to that of the nations, a *fourth* group of six cities—

"Halhul, and Beth-zur, and Gedor, and Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon,"—

Another triumph of divine grace. We must perforce go over it rapidly, but

Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor, and Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon: six cities and their villages.
[Tekoah, and Ephrata, which is Bethlehem, and

would not be thought to make little of what sounds the note of God's evangel as to the world in the near future:—

Halhul, "travail-pain," necessarily preceding it, as the ordinance has been since the fall. No child is born without a pang; no spiritual birth takes place without a deeper pang; how great then when it is the world's labor-pain, as here: what a convulsion when those judgments of God are on the earth, in which the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (Isa. xxvi. 9.) Man's day will end in terror and dismay; the day of the Lord will be upon all the pride of his heart and the work of his hands, to bring him into the dust out of which His grace shall new-create him. In the time when the earth trembles to its foundations—

Beth-zur, "the house of the rock," will be revealed to him, the firm shelter for faith which will not give way. Christ is of course this, and being found, Christ's arms are put about him, and we find in—

Gedor again the stone "enclosure" for a flock to keep them from wild beasts; and next—

Maarath, "meadow" for pasture. Thus the symbols of a shepherd's care come naturally up where Christ is in connection with men. But this is not enough: He must have hearts that answer to His heart, and thus now we find—

Beth-anoth, the "house of responsive songs." This is the *fifth* name; the sixth is a genuine note of triumph—

El-tekon, "God makes straight:" "I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." (Isa. xlii. 16.)

Thus righteousness reigns, and the course of the world is no longer under the power of him "who worketh in the children of disobedience." Christ reigns, and the whole earth rejoices.

According to our common Bibles, the cities of the mountains end here, with the exception of two names only which stand together in a fifth division. These certainly do not furnish us with the heavenly things of which we are in search; and yet, if not the third, the fifth should, one would suppose, speak of them. Or, after all, can it be that we have not even a hint of these?

Now it is just in this place that the Septuagint introduces another group of eleven cities to which there has been found nothing corresponding in the Hebrew copies. Certain critics, and some of these, as Keil, quite orthodox, contend for the genuineness of this insertion; others refuse it. Is it possible that here may be that of which we are in search?

Those who refuse the testimony of the Septuagint, allege the many additions as well as omissions and arbitrary changes made by the Greek translators in this part: a thing which cannot be denied. Bunsen also objects that "The forms of many of these names are decidedly not Hebrew; besides, except Tekoa and Bethlehem, not one of the cities is elsewhere mentioned in the Old Testament." To which Fay replies that "the first reason is an assertion without proof; and the second has no weight, because very many of the cities mentioned in this chapter are named nowhere else in the Old Testament." Our own ability to use them depends upon the practicability of finding them in Hebrew, while other names than those given by Bunsen have at least their possible representatives elsewhere.

Keil says: "This group lay to the north of the fourth, and reached as far as Jerusalem. It comprised a district in which even now there are at least fifteen places and ruins, so that we have not an arbitrary interpolation made by the LXX., as Jerome assumed, but rather a gap in the Hebrew text." A number of the names can be identified with those of places found in this part of Judea at the present time.

Phagor, and Aitam, and Kulon, and Tatami, and Soresh, and Karem, and Gallim, and Baither, and Manocho: eleven cities and their villages.]

Interpretation for us however furnishes the only conclusive test; and this decisively confirms the addition. Spite of whatever difficulty there may be in transliterating the Greek names back to the Hebrew, we are easily able to show that there is a gap filled by it, which would be felt indeed in the spiritual much more than the literal application. Coming under that fifth number in which we find "man with God" as the fundamental thought, we find just what we looked for vainly in the third place; while the section which in the Hebrew stands fifth, and out of place as that, fills thus, as we hope to show, with perfect accuracy, the sixth and final place. We proceed therefore with assurance to the interpretation.

The eleven names seem to divide into two smaller groups of seven and four, and not as before into six and five. These giving essentially the Godward and manward sides of the eternal life with Him, ending with one sweet word which is the seal of it all,—that we "enter into *His* rest." Could anything be more perfect as a conclusion than just what is here expressed? But all in God's book is perfect: only our astonishing dullness, the fruit of indifference and indolence, and these springing out of unbelief, hinder our perception of it. When shall we awake?

With what does the series begin? With Tekoa, "the sound of the trumpet," —that which summons the dead in Christ from their graves, and the living to go forth to meet Him! as suitable a beginning as the ending. Divine power accomplishes the call, and the next word we have is—

Ephrata, "fertility," the wilderness exchanged for ever for the place of abundance, "which is Bethlehem," "the house of bread," the "Father's house," of which even far-off prodigals bear witness that there is "bread enough and to spare." Little need should there be to apply "the sound of a trumpet" and "the house of bread," as thus connected together! Next we have—

Phagor, (still found as Faghur between Hebron and Bethlehem, "the cessation of sojourning." Then—

Aitam (the Etam of 2 Chron. xi. 6,) "the ravenous beast consumed." And then—

Kulon, "the end of the night-lodging." These three, just in the style of Rev. xxi., picture for us in joyful negations the bliss that is begun. Then—

Tatami, "underneath them Jah:" the everlasting arms still needed by, and ever supporting, creature weakness. While—

Soresh, "the turning aside of fire," would indicate that the holiness of God, which must needs burn against the evil in us—and so it is written, "*Our* God is a consuming fire"—has done its work in this respect, and exists for us no more after this manner. This is the seven complete; and perfection and rest will then manifestly have come. The other numbers can be traced all through by one who desires to do so.

Now comes the manward side. First,—

Karem, "meetings:" the joy of mutual recognition not forgotten, the attachments begun on earth provided for, by Him who has already united us together for eternity, and who said of old to the sorrowing Martha, "*Thy brother* shall rise again."

Then Galem (Gallim?) reminding us of Gilgal, where the reproach of God's people of old was "rolled away." Now this shall be done completely; while—

Baither, or Bether, reminds us no less of those "mountains of Bether" ("separation, seclusion?") here amid the joy of heaven to let us know of that inner sanctuary of the heart which shall be kept ever sacred to the joy of One Voice that speaks there,—no more any babble of other sounds to keep it out.

Then comes the final word, Manocho, perhaps the Manahath of Chronicles

*d* (61, 62.) The wilderness.

Kirjath-baal, that is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah: two cities and their villages.

(*d*) In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin, and Se-

(1 Chron. viii. 6), but yet with a termination which gives it all its distinctive beauty in this connection, "the place of *His* rest." Words would but take away from the fullness of meaning here.

Who will deny that the insertion of the Septuagint justifies itself, if spiritual significance is to count for anything? But a witness to it yet remains, that of the last two of the cities of the mountain, which, as already said, become now a *sixth*, instead of, as in the Hebrew, a *fifth* division. Six speaks of the full development of evil, yet as under the hand of Him who has power over it. And the names here are

Kirjath-Baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah.

One form of evil remains, as it would seem, for distinct notice now, and Kirjath-Baal, the city of Baal, brings it before us in the most vivid way. Idolatry, and where in the idol also the true God is not even pictured, is indeed the triumph of Satan over man, his deluded captive. But Satan is cast down; Kirjath-Baal becomes in Israel's hands Kirjath-jearim, the "city of woods." We have met this when tracing Judah's northern boundary to the sea, and we have seen that it there conveys no good suggestion. It is the abode of pride and prodigality, that on the one hand which betrays us into Satan's hand, and that in which as prodigals in a far country we bring ourselves into a want, out of which no power but one can ever rescue us. The change of Kirjath-Baal into Kirjath-jearim implies the judgment of it before God, its name declared with that which leads to it, and to which it leads. And this is God's sweetest triumph over it, when Satan's captives are thus set free by self-judgment, and judgment of what has ensnared them. Here we are, in fact, on the border of Dan. For the rest—

Rabbah, "great," sufficiently explains it. The power of God must needs prevail; the hand of God will cast down the enemy. This is not even formally said, nor needs to be. It is enough to know that God is God. What shall the wildest effort of men or devils accomplish against Him?

(*d*) Thus fittingly the cities of the mountain end. We have still six cities left, the cities of the wilderness, the number assuring us of another triumph on God's part; which would not be complete, unless the wilderness could furnish, with all else, its material of praise. After having seen, therefore, the end of all, we return now to see that not in vain were the steps that led to it. The sorrow and trial have been temporal, but the lessons are eternal. As we look back from the end we shall see how well suited all God's ways have been, and how completely He was master when we could discern little but man's wild will.

Beth-arabah, the "house of the wilderness," begins the list. It speaks plainly of a Father's sufficiency and care, which the wilderness is the very place to learn. Cut off from all natural resources, the heavenly bread, the water from the rock, the daily guidance, were a constant testimony of this to the people of old; and to educate them in it was a perfect argument for the path by which He led them. And these things are our types: the antitypes transcend them; only faith is needed to behold that which is spiritual; but the clear light of eternity will reveal it all.

We have next Middin, "measurement," the apprehension of things in relation to a standard, the discernment of difference. Here, again, the world, as sin has made it, is where such knowledge is to be attained. Here is the great field of conflict between good and evil. Here sin is seen in its growth and in its effects. Here in the child of God it is brought face to face with that which is of God, and there is learnt the secret of power over it. Here Christ, the Light of the world, has brought very darkness into light. Hence "measurement" of every kind is possible, and "by reason of use" the senses become "exercised to discern both good and evil."

cacah, and Nibshan, and Ir-hammelach, and [y]Engedi: six cities and their villages.

(*e*) But as for the [z]Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not dispossess them, and the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

Joseph: The practical spirit.

1. (xvi. 1-4.) The southern boundary: practice as viewed from the divine call.

(XVI., XVII.)

4. [1]And the lot came forth for the children of [a]Joseph from the Jordan at Jericho, at the waters of Jericho on

[y] 1 Sa. 23. 29.

[z] 2 Sam. 5. 6.

[a] Num. 26. 35-37.

Secacah leads us further. It means "overshadowing," and, under the number which speaks of divine manifestation, naturally leads us to think of the cloud that overshadowed Israel in the wilderness, and was the token of the divine presence in their midst. Their need and His love had brought Him there to minister among them, which for us has been done in a transcendently blessed way. Only in one world has God become incarnate; and over it the heavens opened and poured out their multitudes when Christ was born in flesh. To be in the wilderness of this world is to be where the Son of God has walked and suffered and died; and to have consciousness of the need which He has met, and that He has met it for us, will give us songs the angels know not. Surely God has made the wilderness in this way to blossom for us, and made it good for us to have known its sorrows.

These become intensified in Nibshan, if it mean, as Young says, "furnace," which may refer to the glow of the *khamsin*, the desert wind. Such seasons, with all their trial now, have their commission from God, and so their blessing, consuming, as with the three of old, only the bonds that have bound us, while the Son of God is with us in the fire. It is not adversity we have to fear, though we do fear it, and court what we have rather cause to fear.

Fruit is again found in Ir-hammelach, "the city of salt," that diffusive power of holiness, the true aggressive spirit of Christianity, without which even gracious words fail to "minister grace to the hearers." (Eph. iv. 29.) Is it not that the world's furnace prepares this "salt" for use, or puts it into activity at least? And that he who realizes most the one will be most apt to manifest the other?

The last word here is Engedi, "the spring of the young goat," where Saul afterwards "went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats." (1 Sam. xxiv. 2.) The word in the last case means "climbers;" *gedi* is the young of the same race; and *en* the fountain which sustains them. "The high hills," says the Psalmist, "are a refuge for the wild goats" (Ps. civ. 18); and there the spring is found. The mountains nourish a hardy race, given to surmount difficulties, and the wilderness has water for them. Difficulties call for faith, and increase the faith they call for; while God has special cheer for special need. The number here is again the number of victory.

(*e*) Here the tale of Judah's cities is at last completed; save one, which, on account of Judah's failure, is not added to the rest. Jerusalem, the chief city of all, is yet in Jebusite hands; and there Judah and the Jebusite dwell in strange fellowship together. It is the first indication of that which in the book of Judges soon becomes the token of universal decline. The "could not" here speaks of divine government, as the numerical division does; and we shall have it dwelt upon when we come to Judges. The seed of the future was here at the beginning.

4. We now come to the inheritance of the double-tribe of Joseph, which we have already seen represents the practical spirit which springs from faith, and with this the numerical division is in precise accordance. It is divided again into four subsections, which can be only properly characterized after examination in detail.

(i.) The southern boundary is first given us as that of the whole tribe. As

the east, to the wilderness going up from Jericho to the mount of [b]Bethel. And it went from Bethel to Luz, and passed to the border of the Archite at Ataroth, and it went down westward to the border of the Japhletite, as far as the border of the [c]lower Beth-horon, and as far as [d]Gezer; and it ended at the sea. And the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

[b] Gen. 28.9.
[c] 2 Chron. 8. 5.
[d] 1 Chron. 7. 28.

this it may well represent to us practice from the divine side, or as obedience to the call of God. This the examination of it will, we think, confirm. The language suggests a further division into five parts, giving so many aspects of the practical life, in orderly relation to one another, as we may be sure. There is nothing haphazard in the Word of God.

(*a*) The first stage is from Jordan to the mount of Bethel. The line starts on the east from Jordan, for all true Christian, that is heavenly life for us begins where the waters of death have yielded to the ark of Jehovah's strength, and given us access to the land which is our possession. Then it begins from Jericho also, where the world has received its judgment for faith, and from the "*waters* of Jericho:" for the streams of divine blessing which are taken (as we have seen in Egypt) to nourish the spirit of independence in men away from God, are ours to use freely and without asceticism, yet as from Him and to His praise. Nevertheless, the way is then a "wilderness, which leads up from Jericho to the mount of Bethel," the house of God. The first stage even of our journey is sadly incomplete if it does not bring us there. With the lesson of this house we ought to be, from Jacob's history, already familiar.

(*b*) The second stage is scarcely one at all, and yet of vast importance. It is "from Bethel to Luz" only; and Luz is the old name of the city of Bethel itself. But Jacob's pillar was outside the city at the first, and only after a while, probably by natural outgrowth, they seem to become identified. From the Israelite point of view it was Bethel that absorbed Luz; and at the time of the apportionment the city and the place of the vision were still, it would seem, different.

At any rate, for our purpose it is enough that Luz follows Bethel here. Luz means "separation;" and however much it may exist apart from Bethel (and then it will have only heathen significance), when it is connected with and follows it, then it has its right and necessary place. To be with God as sons and daughters in His house, He has told us, we must not "touch the unclean thing." (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) And defilement must be estimated, not by natural conscience or our own conception, but by His word. It is here, in the very face of His word, that Christians can go so far astray.

(*c*) The third stage is that the boundary "passed over to the border of the Archite, to Ataroth." Archite is from *araeh*, "to advance, make progress," and the Archite is therefore a man of progress. What is before him is very clearly told in the point where the line touches his border, Ataroth, which means "crowns;" and so the apostle says: "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." (1 Cor. ix. 25.) The lucidity of the text here makes it need little the interpreter.

(*d*) In the fourth stage the line descends, and under the number which tells, if any, of contact with the *world*, we reach the border of the Japhletite, "one who causes to escape," and "as far as the border of the *lower* Bethhoron" ("the house of wrath") and "as far as Gezer," "isolation:" words that, for those who are sent into the world with the Gospel of the Master, do not seem as if they should need much more interpretation than the former ones.

(*e*) Hence the border runs to the sea: for in this practical life there are exercises also, and the experiences of storm-tossed mariners, which make the haven more desired to which surely at last Jehovah bringeth them. The line ends here at the haven of the sea.

2. (*vv.* 5–10.) Ephraim's portion.

*a* (*v.* 5.) Southern boundary: governing principles.

*b* (6–8.) Northern boundary.

*c* (8, 9.) Possessions

[2] (*a*) And the border of the children of Ephraim was according to their families: the border of their inheritance was toward the sunrise, [e]Ataroth-Addar, as far as the upper Beth-horon.

(*b*) And the border went forth westward to [f]Michmethah on the north [side]; and the border turned toward the [sun]rise to Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it toward sunrise to Janohah, and went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarah, and touched Jericho, and went out to Jordan. From [g]Tappuah the border went west to the brook [h]Kanah, and ended at the sea.

(*c*) This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families, together with

[e] ch. 18.13.

[f] ch. 17. 7.

[g] ch. 17. 18.

[h] ch. 17. 19.

(ii.) This is the southern boundary of Joseph. We are now called to look at Ephraim separately in the *second* sub-section, which should apparently in its numerical significance have to do with the name. Ephraim means literally "*doubly* fruitful," and may refer to his being the *second* son, through whom indeed Joseph attains the double portion of the birthright. Thus Ephraim in his name expresses the value of both Joseph's sons, and the double fruit would seem to be not only in what we commonly call that, but also in the Manasseh energy of character acquired which turns its back upon all that is "behind," in its racer-like eagerness for goal and prize.

(*a*) In the fifth verse we have the southern boundary of Ephraim given again, but in a fragmentary way, which has induced many criticisms and attempts at emendation. But we could hardly expect a mere repetition of what has just been given; and in the light of the spiritual meaning all is explained easily, distinctive beauty being found in the very points which before were most in question. Thus we have "addar" appended to Ataroth of the former account, and Beth-horon the *upper* given in place of the lower: a thing which to one commentator seems of small account, because the two were so near together! But this is to lose the perfection of the Word of God. The last change is of the most absolute importance for the spiritual significance which it ought not to need to be insisted on governs all. Geography may not need so much precision; but here assuredly is more than that, or I know not why we still take interest in it as Christians.

In fact in these two places on Ephraim's border we have two governing principles of practical life. Ataroth-addar means "crowns of honor;" and note that it is stated to be—not "eastward" merely, geographically, but—"toward the sunrise," *spiritually*. Beth-horon the upper is west from it, as we already know,—*seaward*,—and suggests rightly the exercises and experiences connected with the sea. Beth-horon is the "house of *wrath*;" but notice the importance, then, of distinguishing between the lower and the upper. Wrath *below* is the misery of hell, utter and irremediable; wrath *above*, speaks indeed of sin as the evil thing which God hates, and must hate, because He is holy: but which is not wrath against the *person*, but may be, as chastening, the most tender and paternal love toward him.

Hence Ataroth-addar and Beth-horon the *upper* are opposite thoughts, yet governing as a double star the course of the saint,—divine approbation or divine displeasure,—though divine *love* is for the redeemed in both. Beth-horon the *nether*, the threat of hell, would be for these quite unsuitable, and rob the salvation of Christ of its character as eternal, and our souls of all the peace which it now assures to them.

(*b*) We come now to Ephraim's northern border, which divides into two parts, in which it is traced in opposite directions,—two views in some sense opposite, therefore, though not in contradiction. The one gives, it would seem,

the cities that were set apart for the children of Ephraim in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities and their villages.

*d* (*v.* 10.) Failure.

(*d*) But they did not dispossess the Canaanites that dwelt at [f]Gezer; and the Canaanites have dwelt in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and became tributary servants.

3.(xvii.1-11) Manasseh in the land.

[f] Jud. 1. 29. 1 Kings 9. 16, 21.

*a* (*vv.* 1–6.) The heirs.

[3](*a*) And the lot came to the tribe of [g]Manasseh; and

[g] Num. 26. 29–34.

individual items of the practical life, looked at from its human side from conversion, facing sunrise, that is, in view of accountability at the coming of the Lord. The other, brief indeed, and the more striking for its brevity, gives us, as exercised by these things (looking toward the sea) the helping principle which carries securely through.

In the first case the line begins facing *westward*—merely the sea; in trouble and exercise of heart, we find ourselves at Michmethah, the "corruption of the dead;" then, as the line turns sharply round toward sunrise, we have the striking image of conversion; and in Taanath-Shiloh reached "access to Him who gives peace" to the soul. Thence we come to Janohah, "rest," still turning more toward the coming day.

And now the road descends: the path in which power and fruitfulness are to be shown is one that leads downward, as our Lord's did. But this is a *fourth* step, warning us by the number that trial will be found upon it: remembering which we may rightly interpret the Ataroth,—very different from the former one, to which we now come,—"crowns," before the end is reached, and which can be nothing but temptation to be put away from us; and then we find Naarah, "tossing"; we must needs "touch" Jericho, the world, and have to do in some way with Jordan also, death; and here the list closes on this side.

In the opposite direction we take it up again, to find first a name that has twice truly fulfilled itself to us where we have found it—Tappuah, the "Breather." Here is, indeed, a precious and inspiriting thought. Christ, the last Adam, has breathed into us the breath of a new, eternal life. We belong to a *new* creation: "old things are passed away." And we who thus live are no more to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again."

This is, in fact, the brook Kanah. Kanah means "He has purchased"; and is the thought needed to supplement even Tappuah. Yes, He has purchased us! Let us make it strictly individual, and say, He has purchased *me;* and may it be to us the inspiration that it was to the apostle: "the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*."

But Kanah is a "brook"! Yes, for if this be in my heart, the Spirit of God delighting to glorify Christ, becomes a full flow of living water in my soul, which allows no want. The rest of the line is now nothing but the watercourse itself, until the end is reached. Blessed be God! How sweetly and powerfully, even though they rebuke us, do these "mere names" speak to a Christian soul!

(*c*) It is noted further that besides the cities inclosed within these boundary lines, there were certain others out of Manasseh's territory that were granted to Ephraim. This will come before us where shortly the names are given.

(*d*) But Ephraim does not escape the common failure; and Gezer is noted as a place where the Canaanites were suffered to remain, though becoming servants. Sins are but too often spared as serviceable; and among Ephraimites as much as any. And because a gracious God still blesses, we think He cares but little. Yet a day of reckoning comes at last.

(iii) We have now Manasseh's portion *in the land:* that across Jordan has been already given. He is here in some sense realizing that for which he "forgets" elsewhere. The number of the section may intimate this.

(*a*) The heirs are numbered first, and this is the case with no other of the tribes. Is it that the personal state is more before us,—the man himself as distinguished from his inheritance? The family of Machir have their inheritance

he was the first-born of Joseph. As for Machir the first-born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war, he had [k]Gilead and Bashan. There was also [a portion] for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida: these are the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph that were males, according to their families. And [l]Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters; and these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah and Noah, Hoglah Milcah, and Tirzah. And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, Jehovah commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. And he gave them, according to the commandment of Jehovah, an inheritance among their father's brethren. And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which are beyond Jordan: for the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons; and the land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the sons of Manasseh.

*k* Deut. 3. 13–15.

*l* Num. 27. 1–11.

*b* (7–13.) Their border: connection and separation.

(*b*) And the border of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, which is opposite to Shechem; and the

already the other side of Jordan: six other, all spring originally from Machir, but are reckoned as Gileadites instead of Machirites. (See Num. xxvi.) Thus in different ways Machir and Gilead cover the whole territory of Manasseh. It is Machir the *family* that seems to be the "first-born of Manasseh," as the individual Machir is the father of the whole; and Keil takes "father of Gilead" here as equivalent to ruler of the *land* of Gilead. This interlacing of names must have its reason, and should help us to see that names count for something throughout the history. Even the women of Manasseh show the courage of faith, and gain an inheritance with their brethren. Their story is repeated here, to their praise. We do well to covet the portion God has given us. There is abundance for all, and to enjoy it to the full will only enrich and not impoverish others. Manasseh gains thus ten portions: for the single portion of Zelophehad swells into five through the inheritance of his daughters. "*Covet earnestly* the best gifts."

(*b*) We have now Manasseh's borders, only on one side really defined, and that the south, where Ephraim's line has already been traced. Yet this is repeated with variations from the former account, not surely a mere supplement on account of imperfection in the first, but something very different from this, and proving how little geography is in question. On the north there is no line given at all, simply the statement that it touched Asher on the north, and Issachar on the east, and that Manasseh had cities in both, which looks as if the undetermined line were left for progress,—of which Manasseh is surely the expression. On the south he too yields to Ephraim, expansion being the rule for the people of God. Had they been only faithful, their borders on all sides would have been similarly pushed out. God desired for them growth: they chose, alas, contraction.

The southern border is traced from east to west, not the whole of it, and with some addition in the part given. The starting-point is from Asher,—not the tribe, of course, but a place supposed to be still known, with the same meaning,

border went on the right to the inhabitants of En-tappuah. Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim. And the border descended to the brook Kanah, south of the brook: [m]the cities here belonged to Ephraim among the cities of Manasseh. And the border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook, and ended at the sea: southward it belonged to Ephraim, and northward to Manasseh; and the sea was his border.

m ch. 16. 9.

And they touched Asher on the north, and Issachar toward the [sun]rise. And [n]Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher [o]Beth-shean and her dependencies, and Ibleam and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of Dor and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of [p]Endor and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her dependencies, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her dependencies,—the three hilly regions. But the children of Manasseh [q]could not dispossess [the inhabitants of] these cities, but the Canaanites would dwell in the land. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel were strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, and did not entirely dispossess them.

n 1 Chron. 7. 29.

o 1 Sam. 31. 10.

p1Sam.28.7.

q *ctr.* ch.1.5.

4. (14–18.) Weakness.

[r]And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me one lot and one portion for an inheritance, seeing I am a [r]numerous people, forasmuch as Jehovah hath blessed me hitherto?

r Jud.8.1,2. Jud.12.1,2. *cf.*Ro.12.3.

And Joshua said unto them, If thou art a numerous people, get thee up to the forest, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzite and the Rephaim, since the hill-country of Ephraim is too strait for thee.

"happy," man's original condition. Thence it passes to Michmethah, "the corruption of the dead," which is now marked as opposite to Shechem, "shoulder," already familiar to us as the type of obedience, the bearing of the yoke. So man, not ignorantly, but in full view of duty, turns away from God.

But there is a change: the border passes south, literally "to the right hand," the place of exaltation and honor, but in dependence, and so comes to the inhabitants of En-tappuah, a word we well know as significant of the Breather of new life, a new creation, and with a prefix "En," which means "spring," the living water that waters the new creation-life. Here we are stopped to have it explained that the land only belonged to Manasseh; Tappuah, itself upon the boundary-line, belonged to Ephraim: and so Paul, in New Testament style, tells us that we are "*Created in Christ Jesus* unto good works, which God hath before prepared, that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 10.)

Next we have again the brook Kanah to the sea, south of which the cities are Ephraim's, and north of it Manasseh's, although the boundary-line would have given it all to Manasseh. I do not know the meaning of this.

The boundary-line north, as already said, is not traced, except that it touched Asher on the north, and Issachar toward the sunrise, and that Manasseh possessed cities in both tribes. Yet the extension seems to go beyond their strength, an evil which too often accompanies energy; and the Canaanites retain these cities still, though they become tributaries. The lesson further will be considered in the book of Judges.

(iv.) The expostulation of the brother tribes with Joshua is a pleading of

And the children of Joseph said, The hill-country is [s] not enough for us; and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have [t] chariots of iron, both they that are in Beth-shean and her dependencies, and they that are in the valley of Jezreel. And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a numerous people, and hast great vigor; thou shalt not have one lot only, but the hill-country shall be thine; for it is a [u] forest, and thou shalt cut it down, and it shall be thine to its extremities: for thou shalt dispossess the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they be strong.

Responsibility measured and emphasized in the remaining tribes.

[s] *cf.* ch. 19. 9.

[t] Jud. 1. 19. Zech. 4. 6, 7.

[u] Ps. 74. 5.

(XVIII.–XIX.)

I. (xviii. 1.) The place of the throne.

5. [1] And the whole assembly of the children of Israel gathered together at [v] Shiloh, and set up the tent of

[v] ch. 19. 5. 1 Sam. 1. 3. Ps. 78. 60.

weakness such as can go with high pretensions, and that is but shame. Certainly they have no slight opinion of themselves; yet when it comes to meeting the enemy they are willing to take shelter under the most humiliating confession. It is "when I am weak, then am I strong," so that the true sense of weakness would have only given them encouragement by casting them upon God. Let us be well assured, the plea of weakness will never be used in this way by those who know rightly what their weakness is. They should have said, We are unbelieving, we dare not trust God: we are slothful, and do not want the trouble of clearing the mountain; but then they could not have faced Jehovah with this! How good a thing it would be to look honestly at all our excuses after this fashion; although the effect would surely be that we should find that we had not an excuse that would stand the test! *Can* we have an excuse for not taking possession of what God has made our own? Not unless God fails: if He be for us, who can be against us? Joshua, therefore, cannot admit the excuse. True it is, there is plenty of land for all, and their boundaries, as we have often seen, are quite open for enlargement where there is real need; but this cannot be until they are able to fill what has been already apportioned to them, and the enemies of God are dispossessed from their inheritance. The answer from their Captain is an exhortation with an encouragement. True, if we measure ourselves with difficulties, there is no hope at all: measure them in faith with God, and where have they disappeared?

But all this from the tribe of Joseph is mournful enough. Alas, when has there been a time in the history of God's people in which the seeds of departure were not manifest on every side? And how could there be confidence at any time about them, except in the way the apostle found it, "I have confidence in you through the Lord"?

5. We go on now to consider the portions of the remaining tribes, which are allotted them at one time in Shiloh, the tabernacle having been set up there. This surely is something not irrelevant, but in true relation to the apportionment itself, in which are illustrated God's governmental ways with a people in relation to Himself. And this, of course, implies that the tribes now receiving their apportionment illustrate also responsibility in a way in which previous ones do not. This is very evident as to Judah; while as to Joseph no less is it apparent, I think, that it is not responsibility that is emphasized in what is given as to them. On the other hand, in that which follows it *is*,—Benjamin first of all here giving the abiding in Christ (and therefore He in us), which enables us for it. It is therefore the first and most important duty so to abide. This is the responsibility to which Christ in us answers as the necessary result. And while every true Christian must in the first sense of this abide, yet there are degrees of practical realization none the less.

(i) The tent of meeting is established at Shiloh, "the place of rest" or

2. (xviii. 2–10.) Division of the rest of the land.

meeting there; and the land was subdued before them.
2 And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, to whom they had not yet apportioned their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long will ye be [w] slack to go and possess the land which Jehovah the God of your fathers hath given you? Supply three men for each tribe, and I will send them, and they shall arise and [x] go through the land, and describe it for the appointment of their inheritance; and they shall come unto me. And they shall divide it into seven portions: Judah shall remain in his territory in the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. And ye shall describe the land in seven portions, and bring it hither to me, and I will cast lots for you here before Jehovah our God. For the [y] Levites have no portion among you, because Jehovah's priesthood is their inheritance; and [z] Gad and Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond Jordan toward the [sun]rise, which Moses the servant of Jehovah gave them. And the men arose and went; and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, and I will cast lots for

w *cf.* Heb. 5. 11–14.

x Gen 13.17. *cf.* Eph. 1. 15–23.

y ch. 14. 4.

z ch.13.8–12.

"peace,"—peace having been actually accomplished, and the land subdued before Israel. The tabernacle stood here from Joshua's to Samuel's days, when it was forsaken, the ark going into captivity into the Philistines' land, and never returning to its first abode. Jerusalem, afterwards the throne of the Lord, and now in its turn given up, is yet only abandoned for a time, and has the promise of being God's rest forever, but this very promise to the one assures us that the other is finally abandoned.

The things that happened unto Israel happened unto them for types, and so surely in this case. Like the choice of Saul before David the true king, the choice of Shiloh had no doubt a probationary purpose, as all the history connected with it indicates. The situation of Jerusalem between Benjamin and Judah will be realized by one who considers what we have seen to be expressed by these tribes respectively to be the ideal seat of the lawgiver; Jerusalem itself also being the "foundation of peace," that is "righteousness;" which is the foundation of God's throne no less. Shiloh, on the contrary, was in Ephraim the fruitful, to which men naturally accord the sovereignty. When the kingdom was divided Ephraim became, as we know, the seat of government, *ten* tribes uniting to give this place to her—the ominous number of responsibility. Shiloh in Ephraim seems evidently, therefore, much as Saul before David, or the law before grace, a needed concession to man's natural thoughts, ordained for the trial of them.

However, this scarcely appears as yet, save that the beginnings of failure are in fact seen all round, as we know, and at Shiloh itself the first word is of expostulation: "How long will ye be slack to go and possess the land?" Nor have we any outbreaking of song as when David afterwards brings the ark to Zion. These things speak to the attentive ear discouragingly: God for Himself "chose *not* the tribe of Ephraim" as the place of His throne.

Yet there in the mean time the tent of meeting is, and thither the assembly of Israel gathers.

(ii) Seven tribes have yet to find their portions, and for this Jehovah bids

you here before Jehovah in Shiloh. And the men went
8. (xviii.11.–xix. 51.) The inheritance.
and [a]passed through the land, and described it by cities
[a] ctr. 2 Sam. 24. 5–8.
in seven portions in a [b]book; and they came to Joshua
[b] Ps. 119. 111.
unto the camp at Shiloh. And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before Jehovah; and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

[a] (vv. 11–28.) Benjamin: "abide in Me, and I in you."

* The border.

[3] (*a*) And the lot of the tribe of the children of [c]Benjamin came up according to their families; and the border of their lot went forth between the children of Ju-
[c] Num. 26. 38–41.

them appoint three men of each of these tribes to survey the land and divide it into seven parts, the lot being that which is to determine the portion of each according to these divisions.

(iii) The lots come forth in an order which must, of course, have numerical significance:—

(*a*) First, Benjamin, who receives, as we have already noticed, his inheritance between Judah and Ephraim on the east side, filling up exactly the interval, and uniting these to one another.

Small as the tribe is, we see yet its importance in the care with which its boundaries are traced and its cities enumerated. Though its borders are necessarily those of Ephraim on the one hand and of Judah on the other, and have thus already been given, yet they are repeated now, with certain variations in the description, which are, of course, significant. Its cities, too, are given with care, and numbered like those of Judah, while those of Ephraim and Manasseh both are almost wholly passed over. These things do not merely *happen to be*, but are guided by the hand of God with careful consideration. We should only lose the edification designed for us, if we did not note all this carefully, so as to linger over that on which the Spirit of God lingers, emphasizing in due place, and giving all parts their balance and proportion.

If Benjamin speak of Christ in us, the *power* for a fruitful life in the world, it is easy to see why this should receive more attention and emphasis than the details of the fruitful life itself (Ephraim); and thus it is that Benjamin fills the gap between Judah and Joseph, and comes at the head of the seven tribes here finding their place. "Little Benjamin" is, in this sense, "the ruler" (Ps. lxviii. 27), having in it, in fact, Jerusalem, the city of the King, though Judah might supply the King himself. "Christ in us" is, as has been already said, the objective in the subjective, the personal Christ in His image in the soul; we must expect, therefore, that Benjamin will receive the greater consideration, and should expect ourselves to find the deepest instruction and edification in the details so carefully given here.

We have first the boundaries, then the cities. The boundaries tell us in detail what Benjamin is; for to limit and to define are the same things. They are given consecutively, the line being run completely from the northeastern extremity at the Jordan, west to the south of Bethlehem, giving the north side; south to Kirjath-Jearim,—the west side; east from thence back to Jordan,—the south side; Jordan itself being the east side.

The northern is, of course, at the same time the boundary of Joseph; it is given us also in the same way, from east to west, and thus presents itself for comparison throughout. For there is no mere repetition of what has been already given: the whole is restated, even although the parts may be the same. We have Benjamin now in view, not Ephraim; while, as already said, comparison is necessarily suggested all the way through.

The starting-point is Jordan, and this is given separately, to be considered by itself: "And their border on the north side was from Jordan." Ephraim, too, starts from the river of death, but does not linger there. The difference all through seems to be that in Benjamin we have identification with Christ, in

dah and the children of Joseph. And their border on the north side was from Jordan, and the border went up to the side of [d] Jericho on the north, and went up through the hill-country westward, and ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven. And the border passed from thence to Luz, to the side of Luz (the same is Bethel) southward; and the border went down to Ataroth- [d] ch. 16.1-3.

Ephraim development of a life which is individual and distinct, although none the less springing from the life of Christ in us. Benjamin's border begins at Jordan, that is in identification with Him in death; but it is as having life in Him that we are thus identified. Benjamin and Ephraim thus begin together, but on different sides of the same line: if we say "life in Christ," Ephraim emphasizes the *life*, Benjamin that it is in *Christ*. These things are never to be separated, but they are easily distinguished.

But thus Ephraim does not, so to speak, tarry at Jordan; Benjamin does. For power upon earth it is of the most essential consequence to realize that we begin with identification with Christ in *death*, which is thus *my* death, the end of *me* for faith, that Christ may live in me. If this first identification be not well realized, the dead self, after all, survives; separate interests become necessarily distraction; the eye not single blurs the image of Christ; and instead of day there is but, at best, a twilight in the soul, which does not develop like the flush of the early morn, "from glory to glory:" for this you need, and only need, thank God, the Sun!

But now we go up: "And the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north"—the *shadowed* side, notice, of the world, but a world which thus (and only thus) becomes ours, Jericho coming, as we see, into the possession of Benjamin by this fact. But still we go up: there is no tarrying here—"and went up through the hill-country westward," nearer heaven and facing the sea, "and ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven"—"house of vanity." Not a cheerful road, one might think, for the feet of a Benjamite; but the cheer is elsewhere: identification with Christ is not that which makes the world bright or the path smooth. It makes the way a pilgrimage.

But that is only one stage of the road. "And the border passed from thence to Luz, to the side of Luz (the same is Bethel) southward." Luz, as has been already said, means "separation"; but Luz is here identified with Bethel, as in Joseph's border it is distinguished from it. It is the Luz aspect that is emphasized in connection with Benjamin, and no wonder: realized identification with Christ cannot fail in maintenance of true separateness, which in the Lord was fuller than the Baptist's, great as was he. But Luz is Bethel, as the apostle fully explains to the Corinthians (2 Cor. vi. 16–18). It is true Benjamite "separation" which makes us realize the blessedness of that home relationship with the Lord Almighty which is indeed what Bethel (the house of God) implies. And how *much* is implied in this! Let the Benjamite who is reviewing his border not pass hastily on from Bethel, not make it merely, in fact, a station by the way. Nay, with him who knows it, it will be no transient thing, as in the Lord's blessed assurance: "If any man love Me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him; and We will come unto him, and *make our abode with him*" (John xiv. 23).

The fourth portion of the line brings us to the end of the north border: "and the border went down to Ataroth-addar, at the hill which is on the south of the lower Beth-horon." Both these names we know, but the utter and solemn contrast is at first sight surprising. That the line goes *down* to "crowns of honor" need not surprise us: with the Lord it did, and thus the identification with Him is maintained. He "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

addar, at the mount which is on the south of the lower Beth-horon.

And the border was drawn so that it turned on the west side southward, from the mount that is before Beth-horon on the south; and it ended at Kirjath-baal (this is Kirjath-jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This was the west side.

And the [e]south side was from the end of Kirjath-jearim; and the border went out westward, and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah; and the bor- [e] ch. 15.5-9.

So much is simple: but what is "the mount which is on the south of the lower Beth-horon"? The mount unnamed must be simple elevation, and on the south side excludes Beth-horon from the portion of Benjamin. Does not the whole point simply and impressively to the day of the Lord in which the crown of glory and the judgment upon evil will be recompensed to saint and sinner?

Here the northern boundary ends, and we turn south along the western one. This is very short, and has but one portion of the line within it: "And the border was drawn so that it turned on the west side southward, from the mount that is before Beth-horon on the south, and it ended at Kirjath-baal (this is Kirjath-jearim), a city of the children of Judah." This is on the border of Dan, and it speaks correspondingly of judgment from its start to its termination. We have already seen in Kirjath-jearim the exposure of Satan and his overthrow. In what perfect connection do we find it here both with the border of Dan and the city of wrath! And we see in Benjamin's "mount" how identification with Christ and exaltation upon earth come at last into visible display together; and this is shown us just where Ephraim's border gives place to Dan! Who is the author of all these harmonies? Is any imagination equal to the feat of creating them? Every name here is a standing proof of verbal inspiration.

We are now come to the southern boundary, which is at the same time Judah's, and trace it *back* to Jordan. It is as if, looking back from the end, (to which in the previous part we have arrived,) we retraced, as we shall retrace, the way by which we have come thither; and in this Benjamin and Judah ("praise") will surely come together. Passing back over the way we have already traced, the landmarks will be the same substantially—almost exactly—all the way through, and the principal difference will be in the direction and in the stages of the journey, which will be numerically different, as indeed they are differently divided also.

The line is broken into five divisions, in the first of which we are bidden simply to consider the point from which we start: "And the south side was from the end of Kirjath-jearim." The number speaks of the righteousness and omnipotence of God, which are clearly shown in the detection, baffling, and overthrow of Satan, not one dupe duped any longer by him, and God supreme in all His excellency as God, every cloud removed. How wondrous will be the time! well may we be called to pause and consider it before we pass on—the time when the barrenness and misery of evil will be manifest to all, and the victory seen to be essentially one of goodness, not merely of power: thus only worthy of Him. This opens the meaning of the second portion:—

"And the border went out westward, and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah." This second portion, under the number which speaks of Christ and of salvation, takes us to the Cross, Nephtoah, "the opening" of the Rock, whence flow the living waters. The connection with Kirjath-jearim is evident. In the Cross power was absent from the side of good, was present with the evil only, yet the victory was complete, as shown in the streams flowing forth, and which have ever since flowed forth. At the first, though on the southern border, and to go east, we find, in fact, the border going west! we are facing the sea of

der went down to the end of the mountain that is before the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the valley of Rephaim on the north; and it went down the valley of Hinnom, to the shoulder of the Jebusite southward, and went down to En-rogel; and it was drawn northward, and went forth to En-shemesh; and it went out

trial, in which, also, the works of the Lord and His wonders appear: thus the character of what is here should be manifest. The bruised foot it is that, as such, bruises the serpent's head. In the day of triumph, it is the *Lamb* who appears.

The third division of the border is a much longer one, though with a number of smaller breaks. It is, in fact, that part of it in which is found the retracing, step by step, of the road traveled; the two former introducing us to it in the light by which it must all be read. Thus we begin again now with judgment:—

"And the border went down to the end of the mountain that is before the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the valley of Rephaim on the north."

Here we have already seen that hell is carefully distinguished from the enemy's power, which the valley of the giants represents. It is the power of God, and for the repression of evil. Satan does not triumph in a single soul cast into hell. If he could do so, heaven would be darkened forever, and the songs of the righteous turned into a wail. This first portion of the third division speaks in its number attached (as I think) of the *barrenness* of rebellion, accomplishing nothing but its own shame, while obedience is the incorruptible seed which really produces, and whose fruit abides.

"And it went down the valley of Hinnom at the side of the Jebusite on the south." The Jebusite stands here, as we know, for Jerusalem; but this is not named as it was when tracing Judah's boundary. The valley of Hinnom, distinguished from any mere effect of the enemy's power, speaks still of the doom of the sinner as not the will of God; as "causeless," save by the sinner himself. Thus it is at the *south* side of the "treader down," not in the shadow of the oppressor.

From thence the line "went down to Enrogel," the "fuller's fountain;" at the third step we find the place of cleansing of garments, going *down* to find it. Not the toil of climbing is needed to find the renewing of the Spirit for one's personal life; not labor nor the uplifting of self, but self-abnegation only. How guilty, then, is he who refuses to take the place in which the grace of God can minister to him!

"And it was drawn on the north, and went forth to Enshemesh," the "fountain of the sun"—a beautiful picture of the Spirit of Christ reflecting Christ; and this comes under the number which speaks of practical walk: what a testimony of the ease and simplicity of a true Christian walk, the power of which is from above, and which without effort reflects the beams that are poured around it! Man is still made nothing of, but in his weakness ministered to, as freely as the sun shines for all that will have it: and that is what the apostle really gives as the witness of Christ: "That was the true light which, coming into the world, shines for every man" (John i. 9).

But why this specification, "drawn on the *north*," just here? Is it because, with all its simplicity, there seems so deep a mystery in it for most? This is at least true, that legality and little faith, and want of devotedness, both cloud the sun and diminish the flow of waters, and Enshemesh often does not answer to the beauty of its name. "This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

"And it went out toward Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim." Geliloth here replaces Gilgal in the boundary of Judah: it is a plural, but otherwise very similar, meaning circuits or revolutions. Yet there must be

to Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim; and it went down to the stone of /Bohan the son of Reuben; and it passed over to the shoulder opposite the Arabah northward, and went down to the Arabah; and the border passed over to the shoulder of Beth- /ch. 15. 6.

a difference in meaning, answering to the difference of form, for no change can be without a purpose in the word of God. God Himself interprets Gilgal, applying it to the rolling away from Israel of the reproach of Egypt. Geliloth, as a plural, can hardly be so definite in application. With the number five attaching to it, the number which speaks of God's governmental ways, one would think naturally of the revolution of those wheels of Divine Providence of which we were reminded in the kindred Eglon, and which are full of intelligence and blessing for the man in Christ, while his place as this no revolutions can affect. Thus Geliloth is simply "opposite" the ascent of Adummim, the homeward path of the "quieted ones."

"And it went down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben." This is the sixth point, a number which, as we know it is that of the overcomer, Bohan, the man of the consecrated hand, may show us the way of overcoming. Only the hands tipped with blood and oil can be expected to leave the Ebenezer stones upon the way; and these will do it.

And now we are nearly back to the beginning of the journey, and the next step brings us face to face with the desert: "and it passed over to the side in front of the Arabah northward." A singular seventh point, as it must seem; and the desert itself is the eighth: "and it went down to the Arabah." But, looking back as we are doing here, why should not the contemplation of the desert be in rest, and the desert itself become a prophecy of new creation? God does not *patch*, and will not have the wilderness forever: must He not, then, have "all things new"?

This after all may not be the interpretation: let it stand then only till a better is suggested. It is evident that this completes the journey, and that in the next division we have got to what in Egypt stood at the beginning of it for Israel, and without which not a step of the journey could have been taken: "And the border passed over to the side of Bethhoglah northward." Bethhoglah, if we have rightly interpreted it, means "the house of revealed sacrifice," and that the word means strictly "*festal* sacrifice" makes the reference to the passover only more complete. The new beginning, "and the border," occurs for the fourth time in this southern boundary, and so should signify that we have here a fourth division. This may be another surprise; but it must be remembered, that looking backwards, as we are doing now, things are seen naturally in new aspects. In this case the number of experience seems a beautiful assurance of how the shelter, the joy, the power of the sacrifice under which first we learned the blessing of redemption, have abode with us all the way. Redemption has been itself testified by the full strain of all the way on to the land before us, and it has more than borne the strain. Its song has not died out, and never will. Well may we bless our God, and joyful indeed may be our hearts, that the strain of the wilderness does really fall upon the redemption provided! The question, will the saint certainly come through, means really, is the salvation of Christ a complete salvation? is Christ our Lord a sufficient Saviour?

We are now back to the sea: "And the border ended at the north bay of the salt sea, at the south end of Jordan." The meaning can only be what we have before seen when looking at Judah's boundary, death bringing to judgment, and the number given here affirms it as God's government. That it is not the death of the sinner He desires, that we have seen most solemnly affirmed also. Judgment, we have been assured at the valley of Hinnom, is His "strange work;" here, we are equally assured, it is what nevertheless, when forced to it, He will execute.

hoglah, northward; and the border ended at the north bay of the salt sea, at the south end of Jordan. This was the south border.

And the Jordan bordereth it on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its borders round about, according to their families.

The cities. And the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were: Jericho, and

The fourth boundary of Benjamin—the eastern one—is Jordan, where we began. Death as the penalty on men connects necessarily with death as the penalty borne for us by Christ, and our identification with Him in it. And Jordan as the fourth boundary is death as stamped upon the fallen creature,—the base line, so to speak, of Benjamin's portion, leaving all that he has to glory in to be CHRIST ALONE!

This is the inheritance, then, of Benjamin as defined by its borders. We have yet to look at its cities, which fill here a second place, not, as in Judah, a fourth. Is it because they do not speak of experiences, but of attributes, namely, of that divine government which "Christ liveth in me" implies? This would seem to be confirmed by the grouping of the cities also. There are two groups of these (an eastern and a western, although not noticed as such in Scripture), and the first consists of just twelve names, the number of manifest divine government. The second, indeed, has fourteen, and yet by division stands as twelve and two, so that the same number is shown in it also, though more obscurely.

The names themselves are, some of them, quite difficult, and do not recur. The words for "hill" are proportionately frequent, as Geba, Gibeath, Ramah, and agree with the character of the land of Benjamin, physically and spiritually: for God hath made the physical the pattern of the spiritual. Would that we knew only how to discern it better?

The twelves in Scripture seem, for the most part, if not always, to divide into four threes, and thus every city here will find its number. The first group of twelve seems to emphasize the *power* of the rule of Christ where the truth of identification with Him is known and recognized by faith. The first necessity for rule is power, and this in its various characters the cities here seem to express. They are thus arranged:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 1. Jericho, 2. Beth-hoglah, 3. Emek-keziz; | 2. 1. Beth-arabah, 2. Zemaraim, 3. Bethel; | 3. 1. Avim, 2. Parah, 3. Ophrah; | 4. 1. Chephar-ha-Ammonai, 2. Ophni, 3. Geba. |

Two of the first three are familiar to us. The third, Emek-keziz, the "valley of cutting off," has been suggested by Grove, with great probability, to refer to the circumcision of the people after they had crossed Jordan, which certainly took place in this neighborhood. Together, and especially if Emek-keziz may mean "*deep* cutting," they may show us the *sufficiency* of Christ to meet the condition of the soul and govern it for God.

Jericho, the well-known type of the world, passes, as we have already seen, into the possession of Benjamin—a world which belongs to the Christian only as he belongs to Christ, and as it, too, is kept by him under the shadow of the cross. Joseph, Manasseh, Machir, have borne in various ways testimony to this truth before; and Scripture is not weary of putting us in remembrance. Thus, if Jericho be the shadow of Egypt here—

Beth-hoglah carries us back to the passover, to the judgment of Egypt on its first-born, to the day of deliverance and departure from it; while—

Emek-keziz gives us the circumcision of heart which is the "putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii.), and thus strikes at the root of all the power of the world. "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii.) This is *sufficient* power.

Beth-hoglah, and Emek-keziz; and Beth-arabah, and [g] Zemaraim, and [h] Bethel; and Avvim, and Parah, and

[g] *cf.* 2 Chr. 13.4.
[h] Gen. 28. 10-19.

The next three would naturally speak of it as *saving* power, but in the sense in which the apostle uses the term in Philippians, not in Romans. Salvation may have various applications; and that which the apostle speaks of in Philippians is not a salvation from wrath and condemnation merely. It is one agreeing with "my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that in everything, as always, so now also, Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or death." Here we have, first of all—

Beth-arabah, the "house of the wilderness," the world become that, a barren place, in which Christ is the need and *home* of the soul. This carries on clearly the truth of the first section, while it expresses in the most vivid way the reality of the world's power being broken. The next word—

Zemaraim, is one of the difficult ones. It has been supposed to refer to one of the families of the Canaanites, the Zemarites, tenth in the genealogical list in Genesis; but this gives no help of the kind we seek. It has been referred to an Arabic root meaning "to be weak, to languish," and to a Chaldee one signifying "to be hot." Yet there is a Hebrew word akin to it, *Zemer*, which means "wool," and was the chief clothing material in Israel. As a dual form, may it not speak of double garments, of protection from the cold which can be often keenly felt in Palestine? and this would not appear unsuitable to the line of truth beginning with Beth-arabah. We are bidden to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and the open testimony to Him implied in this is indeed an effectual safeguard from the chill of the world's night air. Lastly—

Bethel, the house of God, which, as we see in Jacob's history, infers also the discipline of the house, is a third security for the preservation of holiness in the soul, and of the soul in holiness.

The third three seem to speak of fruitfulness. Here we have, first—

Avvim, which was the name, we may remember, of a nation destroyed by the Caphtorim, and who seem characterized by their name as "perverters, overturners." It is not of necessity that they recognized this name themselves, or the character implied in it: such, alas, are the most quiet and respectable of those that are away from God. Their attitude is rebellion. They are not merely negatively fruitless, but positively corrupters and destroyers of what is good and godly. But what is the meaning of the insertion of this name among those of Benjamite cities? Is it, as with Israel's first name, to magnify the grace of Him who out of such material can make a vessel for His praise? So I think we must take it, the confession of what once the people of God were in contrast with—

Parah, in which the effect of grace is seen: "He hath become fruitful" is only rightly appraised when it is seen whom this "he" stands for. While in the third name,

Ophrah, "the female fawn," while still the central idea is fruitfulness, there seem added the thoughts of beauty, gentleness, even fear, which, when it is of God and not of man, can clothe a Benjamite warrior with the most attractive grace.

These three sections seem to yield consistent meaning, on the whole, not doubtful. When we come to the fourth, there is more room to doubt, especially as to the second word, which is in general taken to refer to one of those petty nations with which of old, as in Christian times, the land of Israel was overrun. But this, for one who seeks spiritual meaning, leaves the difficulty as great as ever. Confessing it where we find it, there is still room to suggest what seems to be in harmony with the rest, and not devoid of practical instruction.

The number speaks of testing, and the first name here is—

Chephar-ha-Ammonai, "the village," perhaps "covert," "of the Ammonites." If we have rightly characterized the Ammonite (vol. i., p. 531, *n*), he is just the especial enemy and snare of the Benjamite. Leave him but Christ, and he is

Ophrah; and Chephar-ha-Ammonai, and Ophni, and Geba: twelve cities with their villages.

safe. Filch Christ away from him, and he will be but a shorn Samson, weak as other men, and much more pitiable in his weakness. Now the Ammonite is, as we have conceived him, the heretic in doctrine, not openly but subtly ready to steal Christ away. And we need not wonder, so little are we competent to keep our choicest blessings, to find an Ammonite covert upon Israelite territory. Nay, it would seem they have associates, for such foes seldom work alone :—

Ophni is named from Ophnite, another stranger possibly, although also possibly not; for it is no new thing, alas, for one's foes to be they of one's own household. Ophni is variously interpreted, but the meaning which seems most to be in keeping with its position here is that which makes the derivation to be from a word which in Arabic and Syriac signifies "to become mouldy." Certain it is that it is where decay has come in, we find a soul ready to take part with the Ammonite. Decay shows already that the freshness of first love is gone. Christ is not what He was to it; and here is the enemy's opportunity to tamper with His image, and bring in something which seems, perhaps, at first, to be only a new point of knowledge. But it is leaven in the meal, and it works as leaven: by degrees the whole is leavened; there is another Christ, and not the old one.

What is the remedy? That surely must be in the third name, which has the number of revival, of restoration, and the third name is

Geba, "hill." Benjamin, as has been said, is full of hills. As places of comparative security, cities were largely built on them, and the hill of Geba might well suggest a refuge from an Ammonite "covert." A hill lifts one up above the common level, and gives largeness of view also. Spiritually, the resort to a hill is a confession of feebleness, of need to be raised above oneself, of consciousness that we are in an enemy's country; and, simple as all this is, it is really our effectual safeguard, and the only one. Pride and self-sufficiency are at the bottom of all going astray. They prevent our recourse to Christ: "the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek." What snare could prevail against us, if we walked in self-distrust and humility with God? if, instead of from the common level of the world, we looked at things from the height to which He would lift us!

Thus the last three cities show us the simple condition which secures us against failure and defeat: it is but the abiding in the weakness of which the number of weakness, the number of the creature, reminds us. How, then, it might be thought, could we ever be defeated? Certainly from lack of power we never can.

The rest of the cities of Benjamin form a group, fourteen in number, in which we have presented to us, as it would appear, the *ministry* of Christ, as entered into by the one in whom Christ lives and rules. The spirit of Christ must surely be eminently a spirit of *service*. "I am among you as one that serveth" were His own words: "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." This was His glory, that He had come down into the world to meet, as He only could, the need of the world. This characterized His whole life in its human aspect; and while atonement was His work alone, and it is made, yet he in whom Christ lives will be of necessity one in whom He will be carrying on the work for which He came, in the *spirit* of the wondrous sacrifice which was, in its full reality, His alone. Hence it is most interesting to see how in Benjamin now we have this thought dwelt upon; and in this respect also we see how he unites Judah with Ephraim, while filling his own individual place. Ephraim is fruitfulness, and here surely is fruitfulness; yet, on the other hand, in it the Judah character of "confession" is as clearly found;—the fruit is evangelical; not in personal life, which is Ephraim, but in testimony; while yet having to do in the closest way with personal life, and inseparable from power for it. Thus Benjamin's cities are 14, or 2 x 7, the

[i] Gibeon, and [j] Ramah, and [k] Beeroth, and [l] Mizpeh,
and Chephirah, and Mozah, and Rekem, and Ir-peel,

[i] 1 Ki. 3. 4.
[j] Jud. 4. 5.
[k] 2 Sam.4.2.
[l] 1 Ki. 15.22. Neh. 3. 7.

number of testimony united with that which speaks of a perfect and divine work; while, when divided, as it is divided for us here, it exhibits the numbers 12+2, again the number of testimony, with that which speaks of divine rule, as in the last series.*

Let us now look at this larger section, which as 12 we should find again to be a 4 x 3, and to begin with the work which stamps its character upon the whole of it, the work of the cross. The cities are thus arranged:—

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Gibeon, | 1. Mizpeh, | 1. Rekem, | 1. Zelah, |
| 2. Ramah, | 2. Chephirah, | 2. Irpeel, | 2. Eleph, |
| 3. Beeroth; | 3. Mozah; | 3. Taralah; | 3. Jebusi (Jerusalem). |

What does Gibeon mean? The almost unanimous assurance of lexicographers and commentators is that it is connected with Gibeah, a common word for "hill," the termination giving it a possessive form—"of a hill," a hill city. I confess I can make nothing of it if this be the interpretation: others may, no doubt, succeed better.

But there is an alternative. It may be a compound word, and so mean "pit of iniquity"; or the last part of the word may stand, as sometimes, for "*suffering* for iniquity." The latter meaning I believe to be the true one, and it connects then clearly with the history. The Gibeonites did suffer for the deceit they practiced upon Joshua and Israel, being reduced to bondmen for the imposition.†

But while there is thus a plain link with the history, the spiritual significance is a much deeper one; and here the Cross is surely the true Gibeon, the "pit of suffering for iniquity" indeed. In a series of names developing the significance which we should easily find in them, how divinely suitable is it that that which was the Lord's supremest act of ministry, in its full character quite inimitable, should lead the way!

Then the second name, Ramah, an "elevated place," under the number of salvation, points clearly to the acceptance of that wondrous work, the answer of God to the humiliation and suffering of His Son; and then the answer of the Holy Ghost follows in—

Beeroth, the "wells" of salvation, out of which, for the need of men, with joy we may draw abundant water.

Here, then, is the fountain-head as well as sublimest pattern of ministry, and that which constitutes our sufficiency for it. The next three contemplate the

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*There is, however, lack of an "and" before "Eleph," which should be pointed out, and would suggest, as in other cases, a division here. The 14 would then stand as 10.2.2. I can only mention this and leave it, as the meaning seems to make it 12.2, as shown directly. The letter *v* may have dropped out, but I know of no evidence from MSS.

†A question naturally will be raised here which would equally apply to the interpretation assigned to many of these names, and for that reason deserves a special answer. It may be asked, Could one suppose the Gibeonites to have designated their city by such a name, a name which would have been a prophetic judgment upon their own condition? To this, however, there may be given more than one sufficient answer.

1. The name may not be exactly the original one, but somewhat altered by the Israelites, as we know to have been the case in other instances (as, *e. g.*, Deut. ii. 11, 20: comp. Gen. xiv. 5), as a comment upon the history.

2. With other names, it may be really ambiguous, and capable of a deeper meaning, which the Spirit of God develops for us.

3. It must not be overlooked that the hand of God *has* been manifestly over the history, and that numerous names *are* distinctly prophetic. All those of typical persons are of necessity so, and evidently without any thought of prophesying on the part of those who bestowed them. He without whom not a sparrow falls overrules men in their ignorance continually, leading them undesignedly and in spite of themselves to fulfill His will. These three considerations cover, as I believe, every case such as that before us; and not merely answer the questions, but give us deeper views of divine government than are commonly entertained among Christians to-day.

and Taralah, and Zelah, Eleph, and [m] Jebusi (the same is Jerusalem), Gibeath, Kirjath: fourteen cities with [m] ch. 15. 63.

enemy of this work, whose opposition we have to meet, and from the beginning.

Mizpeh, the "watch-tower," bids us cultivate the spirit that this implies, and be upon our guard against an observant, powerful, and unchanging foe. This is an imperative need for one who would follow in any measure the footsteps of the Saviour of men. We cannot afford for a moment to ignore this foe; only at our peril can we be "ignorant of his devices." Thus the second name here is—

Chephirah, a word which is from caphar, to "cover," and is but the feminine form of *chephir*, a "young lion," so called from his habit of constantly *lurking in the coverts:* "covert-lion" would be a just rendering, and combines the idea of treachery and craft with power and destructiveness. Here is the enemy, and in—

Mozah we have the mode of attack. Mozah means simply "going forth," and must refer to the attack simply, the lion leaving his covert. But this by itself would be almost insignificant: it is a matter of course that the lion will attack. Combine this thought with another, and you have a real warning. Mozah, as going forth, is by interpreters given as a "fount or spring-head"; and it is well known how the lion will look around such places to prey upon the thirst-driven herds that resort to the waters. Here, indeed, is the place, also, of Satan's special attack. Where the Spirit of God is working and souls are being ministered to, there he delights with his roar and the agonized cry of some victim to scatter those of whom God says, "Gather my people together, and I will give them water."

And what remedy? Faith in the great Shepherd whose watchful care is over His own. Vigilance and alertness on the part of His people. The knowledge of Satan's method of itself arms us against him.

We have now another three, which, as a third, should show us the Holy Spirit's work; and so it does. The first word is peculiar and touching: it is—

Rekem, "embroidery," a word that might be thought to have only a very fanciful connection with any spiritual work. Nor is it employed exactly in this way; but the verb is used in a striking passage in that wonderful psalm, the 139th, in which God's thought and care of man is traced from his beginnings in the womb:—"My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and *curiously wrought*"—"embroidered"—"in the lowest parts of the earth." And, indeed, the curious interweaving of nerves, veins, arteries, together can be compared to nothing more justly than to a marvellous embroidery. This, of course, in all men: and can God be wanting in consideration and tenderness for a being upon whom He has bestowed such wonderful care?

This is but the body; but the Psalmist rises up to the *a fortiori* argument—how much more, then, must *He* care for the soul!

But the body falls a victim to disease none the less, and in death all this elaborate workmanship becomes a prey to corruption. Yes; for the spirit, which is the crown and unifier of the body, has fallen away from God its life, and thus the unity which depends upon it tends ever to break up, too! None can restore the body but He who can restore and set right the spirit. Here the marvellous work of Christ alone can suffice to assure us that man is still unchangeably the object of divine regard. The ministry of Christ addresses itself to every one of these creatures that He has made, and the next word is—

Irpeel, "*God* healeth": *that* is the glorious news. It is the precious fact, which every true worker for God realizes in his own experience. The breach in man is healed, because the breach with God is healed, and thus there is

Taralah, "the turning away of curse." Simple all this is; how good to know that such blessedness as this to-day *is* simple. Yet, simple as it is, how great—as great as ever—the need of the proclamation of it still!

their villages. This was the inheritance of the children
*b* (xix. 1-9.) Simeon: communion. of Benjamin according to their families.
(*b*) And the second lot came out for [n] Simeon,—for the
tribe of the children of Simeon according to their fam- [n] Num. 26. 12-14.

We have now come to the fourth three, the number of practical life, the number, also, as we are continually reminded, of creature weakness. Here we have, first—

Zelah, "rib," that which the Lord God at the beginning took from Adam, and built up into a woman, and ordained her to be the help-meet of man. Here the weakness of the creature was recognized and provided for. "It is not good that the man should be alone," God says; and yet he was then as he had been made exactly. The woman, weaker still than he, is ordained his helper. Was she not in some way that by her very weakness? Cast upon him in his strength, a being formed for affection, as an object for the heart to develop the heart in him, deliver him from self-occupation, and, by the help she needed, help her helper? Here is natural ministry, ordained at creation, by which we are linked together by the need we have of one another, and in giving receive, and receive more than we give. Thus, indeed, is ministry as mercy "twice-blessed": and this reflex influence of it Zelah seems to stand for and suggest.

Eleph, "ox," from *aluph*, "to learn," implies training, education, while it is the well-known type of the patient laborer. The number, which is that of addition, progress, emphasizes the former meaning. He who would teach must himself be taught; and he who would teach with God must have learnt with God. God's school is one how different from man's! and in it we must never disjoin "Master and Lord."

Thirdly, Jebusi, the "treader down," when synonymous with Jerusalem, "the foundation of peace," that is, with righteousness, leads us to think still of the laborer, and, indeed, of the threshing of wheat, which was done after this manner. After David had taken the city, so that it had really become Jerusalem, we find the Jebusite Araunah at this work. Threshing is *distinguishing* work: the wheat is separated from the chaff; and this not as mere classification, but because the wheat is wanted, and wanted free from chaff. "If thou take forth the precious from the vile," says God to Jeremiah, "thou shalt be as My mouth." And this is the sanctification of labor, when it is used to separate that which is of God for God; when the heart is on that which is precious, deals with evil only that God may have His place and glory—what is His. And thus the picture is complete.

But there are still two cities more, exceedingly simple in their names; simple, also, in their significance—

Gibeath, which is "hill," and

Kirjath, which is "city"—"*walled* city," really. What can be implied by this, except to show us what is the *help* of labor, what it looks toward and intends. Gibeath the hill is the foundation of the city: "His foundation is in the holy mountains" is said of Zion. (Ps. lxxxvii. 1.) There is but one foundation for the laborer with God, and that is Christ: "other foundation can no man lay;" let us maintain it in these darkening days.

Upon this foundation God is building a city; and, blessed be His name, we are permitted to be helpers therein. It is a city "compacted together," a place where, at last, the links begun on earth shall find their appropriate sphere and sweet acknowledgment. It will be seen, then, that God never intended man to be alone, and that the city, though not in His paradise of old, was His first thought. There, too, shall His delight in man of old find its expression. God shall dwell among them; His glory shall be over them forever, and the Lamb the lamp thereof.

(*b*) The second lot comes forth to Simeon, in perfect accordance with the character of the tribe, whose weakness we have seen to be in its readily formed asso-

ilies; and their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah. And they had in their inheritance [o] Beersheba, and Sheba [Shema?], and Moladah; and Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Ezem; and Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, and Ziklag, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah, and Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuen: thirteen cities with their villages.

[o] ch. 15. 21, etc.

ciations, and for whom God has now, it appears, associations after His own mind, while thus is fulfilled Jacob's prophecy as to them, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." These two seemingly so opposite things are accomplished by their receiving their inheritance in the shape of cities scattered, more or less, within the territory already given to Judah—cities that they are unable to occupy by reason of their portion being too large for them. Alas, how little are we able to enjoy all the blessing God has made our own! But thus He makes the need of Simeon supply the need of Judah, and exhibits to us the dependence of communion (which Simeon stands for) upon worship—the dependence, too, (though with a characteristic difference,) of worship upon communion. Very much as the Levites were in Leviticus given to the priests, so here, we may say, is Simeon given to Judah.

Simeon has thus not a territory, properly, at all; and so no boundary-lines are drawn or spoken of. Communion has in fact, so to speak, no territory of its own—no boundary-lines. The cities speak, not of the things which it has for its own peculiar enjoyment, but of what God has provided for it that it may be maintained. Thus, for instance, Hazar-shual, the restraint upon the flesh, is necessary for the existence of communion, but ideally it belongs as much to Judah, as we have already seen; nor can that be a matter of communion which is not one of worship also.

There are questions about these Simeonite cities, even as to the number of them, the first series being given as thirteen, while there are in the Hebrew text fourteen. The names themselves, according to the commentators, are often represented differently in the Judean list, with sometimes a third difference in 1 Chronicles. For the most part, we may pass over all this, except as the spiritual meaning may be in question, and therefore shall address ourselves to this at once, believing assuredly that "all these things happened unto them for types, and" in this way "were written for our admonition." There are abundant commentaries upon the letter, so that it scarcely needs to add much to the mass that has been accumulated with regard to this.

The first and much the largest series of names, whether they are thirteen or fourteen in number, seems to divide again into four parts, the first three of these being again series of threes. They present to us that which is necessary for the existence of communion, the first three carrying us back to new birth itself. We have had the names before: they are—

First, Beersheba, the "well of the oath." This speaks to us clearly of the Spirit of God, ours as secured and justified by the value of Christ in His perfection as the sacrificial Victim—the seven lambs.

The second, in the common text, Sheba, seems to be an error of transcription for what the Septuagint substitutes for it, Shema ("report"), which in the list of cities of the south stands in the same way before—

Moladah, "birth," and with the same meaning. We are born of the Spirit, born of the Word; and this is the first qualification for communion, a nature capable of apprehending and enjoying the things of God.

The second three speak of the sin yet within, from the power of which there must be deliverance; and first therefore here—

Hazar-shual, "the jackal-pen," the restraint upon the flesh, which has been elsewhere more fully pictured to us. We have, then—

Balah, "withered, old," which, under the number which speaks both of the

> Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan: four cities with their villages.
> And all the villages that were round about these cities to Baalath-beer, Ramah of the south.

cross and of salvation, reminds us that "our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed (annulled), that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) And thus—

Under the number of the Spirit and of resurrection from the dead we have Azem, "strength"—ability to enter unhindered into the portion God has made our own, to enjoy it with God.

The third three now speak of realized consecration: first—

Eltolad, "God is begetter," which gives the divine claim over us as His children—no more absolute or endearing claim than this; and God is here El, "the Mighty," able, spite of all hindrances, to make good His claim. Hence, on the one side we have

Bethul, "separated to God," or, on the other—

Hormah, "ban," separated to destruction, if against Him. Here is absolute devotedness, that knows no indifference, no neutrality. He, and *that*, that is not for God is against Him; he that gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad.

The fourth section is more difficult, though not as to the meanings, except with regard to the first word, which is—

Ziklag. If the last syllable be, as some believe, inverted for the sake of euphony, then it may mean most fittingly "the pressure of the wave"; and this would suit well the number of the section at the head of which it stands. It would thus plainly indicate an hour of trial such as is permitted to test everything that purports to be of God. The next two words—

Beth-marcaboth, the "house of chariots," and—

Hazar-susah, the "horse-enclosure," remind one perforce, in such a connection, of the psalmist's words, "Some trust in horses, and some in chariots." (Ps. xx. 7.) The multiplication of either was forbidden to the Israelites on this very account. Both were used mainly for purposes of war; but Israel's reliance was to be the Lord their God.

Beth-lebaoth, the "house of lionesses," follows in the fourth place, in the Hebrew text. There does not seem the usual clearness, and there must be somewhere some mistake; for while Sharuhen, the "dwelling of grace," according to the dictionaries, would come not unsuitably in the fifth place, the number must then be fourteen instead of thirteen, as in the Hebrew text. The differences in the Septuagint and in 1 Chronicles do not lessen the perplexity, which we must leave, however regretfully, just where it is.

The next group is only of four cities. Two of them, Ether and Ashan, we have had already, plainly referring to our Lord's sanctuary work. Rimmon, the "pomegranate," was on the border of the high-priest's garment. Ain, the first, means "eye" as well as "spring"; and the eye of the priest was constantly in requisition. What we have here, then, is that priestly work of Christ for us, which is needed for the maintenance of communion, as of worship.

Ain comes in the first place, the "eye" which searches out perfectly the truth, in order that intercession may be according to the need, and so the grace ministered. This eye may well be courted, rather than feared: it is the eye of the physician and the friend, not of the judge or accuser; and for the maintenance of communion, what is more necessary than the cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24)? The Psalmist knew not, as we know, the blessedness of One standing as the Mediator-priest, where Christ stands now; and that "throne of grace" to which *we* are bidden to "come boldly, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need," was not to him

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon; for the portion of the children of Judah was [p] too great for them: therefore the children of Simeon inherited within their inheritance.

[p] ch. 17. 16. Ex. 12. 4.

c (xlx. 10–16.) Zebulon: consecration.

(*c*) And the third lot came up for the children of [q] Zebulon according to their families: and the border of

[q] Num. 26. 26, 27.

fair and full in view, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ, as to-day we know it. We can "draw near" as he could not; and what hinders in us the drawing near, except the fear that the light of the throne and the eye of omniscience may lay bare in its reality something we would not have exposed—that we do not wish to see just as it is?

Can there yet be in us such treachery toward Him whom yet we know we cannot deceive? or can there be in Christian hearts such power for self-deception? Let us face the question for ourselves—not in the abstract merely: "Lord, is there possibly such ingratitude, as well as self-deceit, in *me?*"

Ain has thus very special importance in the list of Simeon's cities.

There follows it Remmon, or Rimmon, the "pomegranate," beautiful in flower and rich in fruit, and packed with its many seeds; on the high-priest's garment it speaks of the gospel and its results, and here apparently of the same precious Word, which is indeed nothing else but gospel, and by means of which alone communion is maintained. In the pomegranate, though not of great height (which would make its treasures difficult of access), the leaf is evergreen, the flower and fruit are alike beautiful, the seeds of future fruit are found everywhere in the fruit: a precious picture of the word of divine testimony. And that which goes for communion, yet is not dependent on and maintained by that which is the communication of the grace of God, His mind for men,—is not communion. So important is this second city of Simeon, in this place.

The third is Ether, which has been before shown to speak of "prayer," and that the "effectual, prevailing prayer" of the *truly* "Righteous" One—"Jesus Christ the righteous." This the number marks as special sanctuary work: and hidden from us as it is, what we owe to it we shall only rightly know above.

The fourth city—reminding us once more of our weakness—is Ashan, "smoke," and which also we have seen to refer to the sanctuary incense. We are thus brought now to consider the need we have of prayer ourselves, and the virtue which Christ's perfection gives to it. With which this series seems to be every way, indeed, complete.

To these, as an appendix, are added many unnamed villages round about these cities to Baalath-beer, the Ramath of the south, names beautifully and simply expressive. The "mistress of the *well*" must of necessity be "the exalted one" of the dry "south," but which only needs the water to develop into magnificent fruitfulness. Blessed be God that for us there is this constant need of water from beneath and from above. Egypt, with its river of which they cannot see the source, is not our portion; we have *need* of the Spirit, and thus His gracious, patient, abundant ministry, as witnessed to us in the first of Simeon's cities, secured to us by oath. "He who can swear by no greater has sworn by Himself, saying, Surely, blessing, I will bless thee!" Be it so, amen, Lord; and may faith in Thy people grasp the blessing!

(*c*) And now we go on to Zebulon, whose significance is simple from his name and the way in which Leah uses it. She called him Zebulon (dwelling), saying, "This time will my husband dwell with me." The spiritual thought connected with Zebulon is dwelling in the relation which God has given us to Himself, which is the only true thought of consecration. And with this the number under which we find Zebulon here plainly agrees.

their inheritance was unto Sarid; and their border went up westward, even to Maralah, and touched Dabbesheth, and touched the brook which is before Jokneam, and it turned from Sarid eastward, toward the rising of the sun, to the border of [r] Chisloth-tabor, and went forth to Daberath, and went up to Japhia; and thence it

r Jud. 4. 6.

Zebulon's border is given in three divisions, not completely: why should it be assumed that it ever was, or was intended to be, complete? We touch everywhere here upon things that are beyond us; and they cannot always, perhaps, have—sometimes need not have—complete definition. The spiritual sense—spiritual profit—governs everything here as much as in any other part of the word of God; and this destroys entirely the value of much acute criticism: we must get the divine, not the mere human, point of view. Certainly it can hardly be supposed that all the deficiencies that are to be found in this respect in the enumeration of cities here or the tracing of the boundary-lines are mere gaps in the manuscripts! If so, they are more imperfect than we have had any idea of. On the other hand, that there is design in the omissions is evident to one who will reverently consider them in the light only of such imperfect study as we are pursuing now; and the deeper the study, if a believing one, the more will this be apparent.

Judging simply from the language used, the description of the border falls into three parts, the first of which goes no further than to name the starting-point. This must, then, be of intense importance. From it the boundary is traced both west and east:—

"And the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid."

Sarid means "remnant"—"what is left"; and this, under the number which may imply singularity or solitariness, should be, indeed, sufficiently impressive. "Antipas," whom the Lord calls "my faithful martyr," according to the significance of a name evidently meant to be significant, had "every one against" him: and if we are to be truly consecrated men, we must, before all things, dare to be singular. God must control us, as if there were not another. I do not mean, of course, that He will desire to have us, even for a moment, *indifferent* to others. Yet, says the Lord, "If any man come after Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke xiv. 26.) This is simply uncompromising obedience, which to anything but a perfect will would be insanity, but which to God is the highest reason that can be. And this is insisted on, by the mere description of this boundary of Zebulon, in the most absolute way. "You must start," it says, "if you are going to define for yourself what consecration to God is, *by yourself alone*—a *remnant of one*, if need be"! How important is it to get the right starting-point!

The consequences are not hidden: "And the border went up westward, even to Maralah ('shaking'), and touched Dabbesheth (the 'murmuring of reproach'), and touched the brook which is before Jokneam ('the possession of the people')." *Before*, in front of, not *in* the possession of, the people: there is the refreshment God has provided for you; and alas, you will find, if you are on this track, that the mass do not share it with you! It is beyond them, not because God will have it so, but *they* will have it.

In this part of the line we have been going westward—*facing the sea*. But there is another way. However, we must return to Sarid first:—

"And it turned from Sarid eastward, toward the rising of the sun"—the double view of the east, meeting, like Judah in the wilderness, the breath of the desert with the song of the dawn—"to the border of Chisloth-Tabor" (the "loins," that is, the "strength of purpose").

Here there is a well-provided road: "And it went forth to Daberath ('pas-

passed eastward, toward the rising of the sun, to [s]Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and went out to Rimmon, which reacheth unto Neah; and the border turned about it

[s] 2 Ki. 14.25.

ture'), and went up to Japhia," "shining." The splendor of the dawn already greets one on this higher land.

"And thence it passed eastward, toward the rising of the sun, to Gath-hepher (the 'winepress-digging'), to Ethkazin (the 'occasion for a captain'); and it went out to Rimmon," the "pomegranate," which we have seen but awhile since to symbolize the precious word of God—"which reacheth unto Neah" (the "wanderer")—thank God, it does! All this speaks easily of the activity and energy which characterize the Zebulonite who dwells with God. Notice that the word of God in its fullness, which the pomegranate so strikingly represents, furnishes and gives direction to these activities; and that the "captain" is, literally, "the outermost man," the one who stands out from the rest, which is really the thought with which we started here.

We have now come to the third and last part of the border, which seems as if it should speak of *inward realization* of the Zebulon portion. "And the border turned about it (Rimmon) northward to Hannathon, and ended in the valley of Jephtah-el." Hannathon means "obtained by grace," and the border clings to Rimmon in reaching it. Nothing, indeed, to the soul that walks with God, can be a deeper experience than that all is of grace; there is none with which the Word more unites itself than this. But why does the border turn northward here? Is it because this abundant grace is at the same time a great mystery? It ends at Jephtah-el, "God openeth," the word for God being El, the Mighty. But openeth *what?* Is it the way of access to Himself? Is it the deep things which His Spirit searcheth? Is it the way before us as we travel it? It may well be all these, as nothing here would seem to limit it. But with the man who dwells with God, the grace and power of God, with the fullness that is in His bounteous hand, seem to be spoken of as the sweet and certified realities. Correspondingly, the line ends in a "valley": weakness and nothingness are realized, not in dismay or discouragement, but the very opposite. Still they are realized: for "the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy," saith: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. lvii. 15.)

The list of the cities of Zebulon comes in the fourth place, not separated from the boundary, but apparently including those that have been mentioned in it: for they are said to be twelve in number, while only five are given apart from these. Keil owns that "after deducting Chisloth-Tabor and Dabrath, which belonged to Issachar, the names Sarid, Maralah, Dabbasheth, Japhia, Gath-hepher, Eth-Kazin, and Channathon, give just seven towns. Nevertheless," he adds, "there is very little probability in this conjecture." The only alternative being to imagine a gap to this extent in the text, impossible to fill up, or that five should replace twelve, as the number of cities, involving a merely conjectural alteration of it, let us see how interpretation may help us to decide the matter.

Now the number five, as that of man with God, is one that we might expect to find in relation to Zebulon. The twelve of the text, however, does not displace it as the number of cities in this fourth section, while it adds to it the thought of manifest divine control which suits Zebulon certainly, no less than Benjamin. But this is not enough to decide so doubtful a matter. Our only sufficient argument will be found in examining, in the light of the numerals, the names actually found here, and see how they will read on either supposition.

There is a difficulty as to the meaning of one, if not two, of the names also, which is disappointing, especially where a question of this kind is to be decided. Critics are, however, I believe, agreed that in Isa. vii. 19, the word

> northward to Hannathon, and ended in the valley of Jiphtah-el. And Kattath, and Nahalal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities and their

which stands second here means, not "bushes," as our common version reads, but "pastures." The fourth word, Idalah, is much more uncertain. Simonis gives "God exalteth," but the etymology is not as clear as one would desire. Dr. Young gives "memorial of God," but of course says nothing of etymology, and is in general but little reliable on account of his common preference of an inferential for a literal rendering. The other names are clear, and the list will stand thus:—

1. Kattath, "little."
2. Nahalal, "pasture."
3. Shimron, "watch," or "watchful care."
4. Idalah, "God exalteth," "memorial of God."
5. Bethlehem, "house of bread."

If these, as Keil suggests, are part of a series of twelve, the numbers will be quite different. Twelve is always in Scripture, as far as I am aware, a series of three (4 x 3); but then we do not know the places of the five here in the twelve. You may interpolate names *ad libitum*, and give existing ones any imaginable place. If they are the closing fragment, the numbers would be 2. 3. 1. 2. 3, and would belong to the third and fourth sections of the whole. I think that they will be found to yield in this way no consistent interpretation.

Now let us read them as they stand. First, as a fourth division of the account of Zebulon, they give us things which test the truth of such consecration as we have seen that he represents. This thought of "tests" is the only one the number stands for, which links together these five names in one consistent meaning.

The first name is Kattath, "little," the number being that which speaks of integrity, whole-heartedness. Now it is just that which is *little* which tests us in this respect. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." (Luke xvi. 10.) The great things many motives may conspire to induce us to regard. Things that are in themselves moral or immoral command any ordinary conscience; but to that of which no account can be given but that it is the Lord's will, how many excuses can be found for disobedience! Thus, how many respect James's admonition as to rich and poor in the assembly (Jas. ii. 1-4)? and there are things in abundance, that can be found by any one who will seek for them, that are much keener tests than this.

The second name is Nahalal, "pasture"; and while, at first sight, there does not seem much in this to connect with the line of thought before us, it is a fact that there is scarcely anything, perhaps, that is a greater test of the soul's condition than that of where it seeks its food. The Israelite's restrictions as to food have here plain and serious application. (See Lev. xi.) He who finds his recreation in the novel or the newspaper, how can he seek or find it in the things of God? On the other hand, can there be a soul that is with God, to whom His word is not a constant necessity, and an unfailing source of interest and delight? Such questions have but one answer; and they completely justify the place of Nahalal among the Zebulon names: while the numerical place puts to us the apostle's admonition itself, so emphasizing the necessity we have just appealed to, "*As new-born babes*, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may *grow thereby*." (1 Pet. ii. 2.) How MUCH does a new-born babe need milk?

The third name is Shimron, "watchful care." And the habitual realization of the Lord's presence will surely be marked by habitual watchfulness over ourselves. Not that it will induce or promote legal self-occupation. Legality makes much of self, which is the centre of its hopes and fears. The presence of the Lord, where realized in the sense of His grace, occupies us with *Him*, but thus makes evil much more hateful and horrible, and throws over one the shield

villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Zebulon according to their families: these cities and their villages.

d (vv. 17-23.) Issachar: the walk on earth.

(*d*) The fourth lot came forth for 'Issachar,—for the children of Issachar according to their families. And their territory was unto "Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and

t Num. 26. 23-25.
u 1 Ki. 18. 45. 1 Ki. 21. 1, etc. Hos. 1. 4, 14.

which repels it. The holiness of God's presence therefore furnishes the third test.

The fourth name is Idalah: and here Simonis gives, at least, the meaning which seems to furnish one of the most searching tests of all. When "*God* exalteth," how readily may we forget that native weakness of which the number reminds us! Even the apostle Paul needed in such a case a "thorn in the flesh"—Satan's buffeting to balance the tendency to self-exaltation. Here is the snare of one who may stand forth at the moment of need for a "captain"; and how great is the need of such leaders being remembered at the throne of grace!

The fifth and final name is Bethlehem, the "house of bread." We have before recognized it as the sweet and fitting title of the Father's house. There there will be no testing; but for the Zebulonite who dwells with God even here, where He is pleased to have a tabernacle in the wilderness, it will not surely be the less, but the more, a longing to dwell with Him where His own house is. The coming of the Lord is thus left as the final appeal to the heart in Scripture: "Behold, I come quickly." May our hearts answer, as did his to whom the announcement was made! The number here is five, that of God with man, and of the recompensing end! Could there be greater harmony?

I think that the demonstration is complete that the names of the cities are not a fragment, but a perfect whole. Yet the number twelve seems to me right also in the way that others have suggested, viz., by counting in the border cities. In this way the text of our Bibles is right in both respects.

(*d*) The fourth lot is that of Issachar. And while we have had little to show us the spiritual significance of the tribe, there is but one which can be attached to it in the place which it here occupies. Issachar must speak of the walk upon earth, of course to be distinguished from Ephraim, which is fruit developed in *character*. The character being *manifested* in the walk, and the *deeds* done in the body that of which account is to be given, and for which reward is received, very clearly explains the name Issachar, "there is reward." We see, too, why there is no real attempt to draw the boundary-line: little definition can be in this case needed.

There are three parts to the description, the first of which contains thirteen out of the sixteen cities. This first part considers the walk *in itself*, and is subdivided again into four parts, three of three, and the fourth of four names. It is the usual division of twelve with one name additional added to the last part.

Looking at the names, it is evident that they are very different in character from most of the former ones. They seem to be full of warnings, the first section to be little else; and the walk itself pictured as in a scene of danger and of sorrow, although there is, blessed be God, another side. The first section stands thus:—

1. { *1.* Jezreel, *2.* Chesulloth, *3.* Shunem;
2. { *1.* Hapharaim, *2.* Shion, *3.* Anaharath;
3. { *1.* Rabbith, *2.* Kishion, *3.* Abez;
4. { *1.* Remeth, *2.* En-gannim, *3.* En-haddah, *4.* Beth-pazzez.

The first three give us what we may call the harmony of the walk. The first,—

Jezreel, "seed of God," reminds us again of the new birth without which there can be no right walk at all, and which is of the incorruptible seed of the word of God. (1 Pet. i. 23.) This "seed," when truly received in the power of

v Shunem, and Hapharaim, and Shion, and Anaharath, and Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez, and Remeth, and Engannim, and Enhaddah, and Beth-pazzez; and the

v 1 Sam. 28. 4. 2 Ki. 4. 8.

the Holy Ghost, carries the life in it, according to the natural type. God's work comes thus necessarily at the beginning of all else, and we have as the result developed in it—

Chesulloth, literally "loins," which are so called from their stiffness and strength, and stand spiritually for the confidence which gives strength, enabling the back to carry its burden and the whole man for his work. The stiffness here implied is an important feature, imaging an unyielding faith which is needed for the world we pass through; while—

Shunem, "conformity," literally "their being leveled" or "made like," speaks of the life being shaped by the word received. These three things are clearly at the basis of all right walk.

The next three warn us at once of the opposition to be met and of the possible result of much toil and eager expectation:—

Hapharaim, "double confusion," a word which "applies," says Wilson, "to being frustrated and disappointed of one's plans and expectations." Here it is in the dual number, and may perhaps imply disappointment both of present success and future reward. For even with the Christian, alas, not everything that seemeth right in his own eyes is really found to be so: how much is not conformed to the one only standard of the word of God, but, at the best, to what we may think reasonable! But reason cannot rise up to that "wisdom which is from above," and which, with "every good and perfect gift, cometh down from the Father of lights." (Jas. iii. 17; i. 17.) Here is what avails for every position in which one can be found; but alas, our own wills come in to obscure to us His perfect will; and may not this be what the numerical place indicates, the thing in which our danger lies so constantly—an independent will?

Shion, though generally given as "destruction," may mean, rather, "he who puts at ease," the link between the two meanings being that of "security;" in the sense of that false ease which often exposes to destruction. Here it would seem that we should have the better sense. Having given us already the "confusion" which may be ours from taking our own way, what should the names show us now under the number of salvation but the One Person who alone can give us rest and security, "quiet from the fear of evil"? Christ is unfailingly our safeguard in all doubtful matters, the Shepherd who "leads in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." (Ps. xxiii. 3.) And suitedly there would follow, under the number that speaks of holiness—

Anaharath, for which Dr. Young gives the meaning of the "narrow way." This seems to verify itself by its perfect appropriateness to all the connection. Truth is one, and the right way for us at any time is only one, for God has only one thing in His will for us at any one time. The Spirit of God says to us, "*This* is the way," and not "*any one of these* is the way." Thus it is narrow; but who that knows it would wish it to be broader? Who would desire to have a choice of his own, who could have instead God's choice for him?

The third three are more difficult. The numerical place may speak of realization or of manifestation, possibly both: at least the realization of many a hope makes manifest what it is, and the true nature of our desire after it. This seems to connect the three following names together in an intelligible manner, and to be the only thing which does so. The first name here, alas, gives the nature often of such hopes—

Rabbith, a "great place." Emulation is that which the training in all our schools to-day deliberately fosters, as the spirit of success in life; and it has how many religious forms! It was the spirit which the desire to sit on Christ's right and left hand in His kingdom showed in the sons of Zebedee, as well as in the other disciples by their murmuring at it. The Lord rebukes it by appeal to His

> border reached to Tabor, and Shahazum, and Beth-shemesh; and their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities and their villages. This was the inheritance of

own chosen place among them, "come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." How little like the kingdoms of the Gentiles would be the kingdom of such a King!

And what must be the consequence of being permitted to realize these hopes of greatness? This seems to be answered in the two names that follow: first—

Kishion, "hardness," or perhaps preferably "hardening." For if self be in the desire, the "seeking our own things," which the apostle characterized as the condition general among the Christians at Rome when he wrote to the Philippians, what will the attainment of the desire naturally do but give opportunity for the indulgence of self which this implies, and in result harden the heart by shutting it up in self-gratification?

This is but the law of progress, and the stamp upon which the Spirit of God puts in the next name—

Abez, which seems akin to *bizzah*, "mire," and to be illustrated in Habakkuk's "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!" A terrible weight upon himself may be thus accumulated by one who is yet Christ's, but who in the government of God must meet the consequences, though as a father's chastening, and for final blessing!

These three sections, while contemplating the earthly walk, keep the eye, however, fixed upon oneself; the fourth contemplates more the world through which the walk is, and this in perfect conformity with the number attached. Here we have, first—

Remeth, "height," the possession given us in God's grace being *above* the world. It is as taken out of the world we are sent into it, and the first necessity is to maintain the possession.

To be above the world is to be master over it; and the Lord has given us all this place, not of it, as He is not of it. We only need to fill that place—by faith to be living in it, and this will be "the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "If any man be in Christ, it is *new* creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) This is the vantage-point for us.

En-gannim, a "fountain of gardens," speaks of the Spirit's work in the world. A garden is a special inclosure, and implies the need of separation, protection, and a nurturing hand. The Spirit's work is thus to separate and nourish the people of God, as exotics in a strange country. The world around remains a wilderness. "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; . . . a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." (Song iv. 12, 15.)

Thus we are above the world, but in it, and yet separated from it:—

En-haddah, the "fountain of exhilaration," makes us contemplate the Spirit as filling the soul with its proper joy. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," says the apostle, "but be filled with the Spirit"—wherein is *no* excess. (Eph. v. 18.) How important is it to ask ourselves, what is it that I look to for recreation? what is it that bubbles out of me when I am glad? To pray when we are afflicted, that is well; but if we are merry, do we sing psalms? (Jas. v. 13.) Is Christ our Deliverer from sin and wrath, and should He not be the the joy and brightness of our lives also—our very life? Certainly En-haddah is a most needed memorial to us, coming in the place it does; and we do well to give the most attentive heed to it.

Lastly, Beth-pazzez, the "house of disruption," reveals the world as the place of contradiction and of opposition, of the need of separation, and of the difficulty of the accomplishment of this; of a scene where the precious needs to be taken

the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

*e* (24-31.) Asher: the happy.

(*e*) And the fifth lot came forth for the tribe of the children of *w* Asher according to their families. And their

*w* Num. 26. 44-47.

from the vile; and where we ourselves have to experience the ruin which has come in, and opposition to Christ in our own homes and hearts.

We have now evidently a new division of Issachar's cities, and though a very small, yet a most interesting one. The language shows the new beginning:—

"And the border reached unto Tabor and Shahazum and Beth-shemesh."

"Crucified to the world" is, after all, the salvation-side of the practical walk; and that is what this second division emphasizes for us. The number is that of the cross, as we know. The names show us this as a practical reality wrought into the life. First—

Tabor, "purpose," for, while we can *promise* nothing to God, "purpose of heart," such as Barnabas exhorted the saints to (Acts xi. 23), is most needful. Next—

Shahazum, not a plural form, as most take it, and meaning "heights," but, as in Kethib, the written text of our Bibles, rather a compound word, and meaning "humbled with fasting." This is the practical carrying out of purpose, not so much in literal abstinence as in spiritual holding off from what incites the flesh. For the flesh is the world's advocate, and here the victory is to be really got.

The third name, Beth-shemesh, the "house of the sun," shows how little dark need be a life of this sort. Nay, we are children of the light and of the day, not of the night, nor of darkness: of a day, too, in which the sun never sets, and where the sky never need be clouded. A good name, this, with which to end the list of Issachar's cities. We have only, besides, that—

"Their border ended at the Jordan": where, of course, the earth-walk must end; but this is a *third* division, because for death there is a resurrection; nay, there is a resurrection-life *now*, to which the end of earth is but the entrance into heaven.

(*e*) The fifth lot falls to Asher, "the happy,"—if the thought answer to the name,—a singular idea, it might seem, to have distinct representation thus among the tribes of Israel. So far, we have had no indication of any other; and a deeper consideration will make it apparent that it is of immense importance that the people of God should be known as a "happy" people. If "the joy of the Lord is your strength," then happiness must have for the soul a large spiritual value. As a testimony to God it must be of no less. One of the characteristics of the true "circumcision," as given by the apostle, is that they "rejoice in Christ Jesus": and his exhortation to the same people is, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. iii. 3; iv. 4.) Such joy is one of the best signs that the knowledge of the gospel has reached the heart, and that the life will be governed by it. It is quite true that feelings may easily be put in a wrong place, as in the first quest of peace they are almost sure to be. There is plenty of need for insisting on the truth that we are not justified by feeling but by faith. Nay, it is certain that the reception of the gospel with *immediate* joy is made by the Lord Himself a sign rather of stony-ground hearing than of a fruitful reception of the Word. (Matt. xiii. 20.) Plowing up must be before the seed can spring up aright; repentance before God will accompany "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," where the latter is real and effective. This is all true; yet, on the other hand, it is no less true that the effect of the gospel—the "glad tidings"—is to produce gladness, and that the apostle prays for believers that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." (Rom. xv. 13). The third character of the "kingdom of God" he gives, after "righteousness and peace," is "joy in the Holy Ghost" (ch. xiv. 17). "The fruit of the Spirit is" said to be "love, *joy*, peace" (Gal. v. 22.) "And not only so, but we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Rom. v. 11.)

territory was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, and Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and

These passages, of course, define the happiness which they speak of, so that it is impossible to confound it with the mere play of animal spirits, or even the happiness derivable from the hope of salvation. One might have this last, and and yet in fact be unsaved. "*Joy in God through Christ*" is something perfectly distinct, and infinitely higher. As manifested in Asher, we shall find it carefully distinguished from everything that could be confounded with it, as well as in relation to other features of the divine life which find expression in these living pictures. Noticeable it is that Asher occupies the *fifth* place in this series, as in the wilderness he does in connection with Dan (Vol. I., pp. 384, 393, *n*). There the meaning cannot be mistaken that exercise of heart and conscience have essentially to do with the maintenance of a happiness worthy to be called that. Here we may well suppose the numerical place to repeat and emphasize the same thought. Asher's territory runs up to the extreme north, between Naphtali and the sea, connecting on the south with Zebulon and Manasseh. All its relations speak thus of trial, exercise, and practical life. If Judah keeps guard at one end of the land, Asher does at the other. The territory assigned it by God is a proportionately large one, but it fails, alas, to fill its limits.

The boundary is described in three divisions of very unequal size. The first begins in the middle of its sea-board line, descends to below Carmel, and then turns eastward, and soon northeast and north, until it reaches its northernmost point at Zidon. The second division is along the sea, southward again, only as far as Tyre; and the third runs down to where it began, somewhere in the neighborhood of Accho or Acre, although the names are little to be traced as yet, and Asher's cities are almost altogether irrecoverable. The history of Asher corresponds with this but too well: Asher has no great names to memorialize what was once a large and important tribe.

The first division of the boundary defines happiness in the various elements which make it up, or which it implies; and the first part of this, which has seven names, more strictly still defines it in itself, as we shall see better when we examine them in detail.

Helkath, "portion, share," is the first of these. *Halak*, from which it is derived, means, according to Wilson, "to divide into parts, *each receiving his portion;* to part, distribute, especially by lot." It implies, therefore, that God has, in respect of happiness, given all His people their portion, each his own. He has shut none out. He has not made it difficult of attainment, the prize of great ability or great effort, either. Faith to receive, giving God credit for what He has done, for what He has said, for what He *is*, is all that is on our part needed.

But though with Christ the secret of happiness is ours, and we have it freely, it has been wrought out for us with infinite pains and cost; and this is what—

Hali assures us of. It means "an ornament curiously wrought with great labor and pains" (Parkhurst), the verb from which it is derived meaning "to faint with labor, to labor even to faintness." He who wears such an ornament is seldom the one who fashioned it; and so with the jewel of which we speak, Christ has made it, at what personal cost and sacrifice, and made it ours forever: of this how natural and needful to be reminded here. So in the "wine that cheereth God and man," we find at His table the memorial of His precious blood. Next—

Beten, "belly," speaks of the inward realization. The craving of our souls has been met,—so met, that, out of that which by its imperious demands becomes the "god" of other men (Phil. iii. 19), the refreshing streams pour out for the need of others. (John vii. 38.) Here we are reminded that happiness is *within*, in the inmost parts,—no outside circumstances can produce it; and Christ must be for this received into the heart: we have but to drink, for the living water to flow out. It is not effort, but we must first ourselves be filled, that

it reached [x] Carmel westward, and Shihor-libnath, and turned toward the sun-rising to Beth-dagon; and it [x] 1 Kl. 18-19.

there may be a genuine overflow. Christ received into the heart, what can be wanting for abundant happiness? The lack of it is surely proof that there is not heart for Him, or else not faith to entertain Him.

Achshaph is a stranger name in this connection. We have had it before, at the beginning of the eleventh chapter, where the king of Achshaph is one of Jabin's confederates. There we understand it to mean "sorcery," the use of natural things endued by magical formulae or prayers with supernatural powers, to enchant and captivate. In Israel's hands these cities lost their significance for evil; of which we have had many an example. Thus we may apply the Achshaph here without real difficulty to the subject before us. Faith in the soul will indeed exert a transforming power upon the things around. When all that comes is seen in the light of Christ glorified and upon the Father's throne, it is of necessity transformed. "All these things are against me," said Jacob of old; but faith says "He maketh *all things* work together for good to them that love Him." That which may have been done by an enemy's hand becomes thus the fruit of unmistaking love. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" was the Lord's own and unanswerable question with regard to what was the worst of all iniquity and the most mysterious of afflictions. The cross has lifted the veil of all other mysteries, and shown us everywhere One well-known Face. This is, according to the number here, our happiness as to the world through which we pass: it is in this way transformed by it.

The last three of these seven names give us now in a clear and pronounced way the secret of this happiness:—first,

Alammelech: "God is King." This is the Old Testament version of the apostle's "Rejoice in the Lord," where, of course, Christ is the Lord. But this is only a more pregnant and intelligible way of saying, "God is King." Not only is Christ God, and upon the throne of God, but also Christ it is who has manifested God to us, and given Him in our hearts the glorious throne which now He has. He who knows Christ, with him is the "shout of a king" (Num. xxiii. 21); and to know who fills the throne is happiness indeed. This brings with it also the spirit of obedience; and such joy has in it stability and safety. God and man are at one indeed.

Amad confirms this from the other side: it means "an eternal people." Brought to God, we are His forever: sin and all its effects are triumphed over, and Christ a man is the eternal link with men, a pledge never to be taken back, a bond never to be broken or unclasped. This is the necessary complement of Alammelech; and yet there is for present happiness one thing more; and this we find in—

Misheal, "feeling after God," which gives us the energy of soul in one before whom God is, and whose heart is won by Him, who on this account, and realizing his little knowledge, seeks for more; yea, presses on after that being with Him "face to face" which is the unimaginable joy before us all. The Psalms are full of this longing after God, which in the epistle to the Philippians takes for the apostle the shape of seeking to "win Christ and be found in Him," that Christ whom he had seen in glory, and the vision of whom had stamped itself upon his soul, and henceforth led him, "doing one thing." This is the Manasseh spirit, and Asher touches Manasseh very near to Misheal,—how near, no one can yet say. But who doubts the happiness of so great an attraction in an object not uncertain of attainment, but most certain to be attained? It is the happiness which is the power.

The second portion of the main division gives us but three names, which all mark connection with Manasseh, whose border must be in contact with Asher near this point, although we cannot trace it with any exactness. But the spiritual meaning is in evident accordance with the trend of the boundary. Manas-

reached to Zebulon, and the valley of Jiphtah-el, northward of Beth-emek and Neiel; and it went out to Cabul

seh is, of all the tribes, that which speaks most of progress, and the three names here all imply this.

"And it reached Carmel westward, and Shihor-libnath, and turned toward the sunrise to Beth-dagon."

Carmel, "vineyard of God," suggests the thought of concentration, the very spirit of Manasseh, read in the light of the epistle to the Philippians. For a vineyard is, above all, that which exemplifies the need of pruning, and it is from a word of this meaning that that for vineyard here is derived. To have fruit such as is sought, a vine needs the knife to be applied unsparingly: "every branch in me that beareth not fruit" the husbandman "taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit:" the lesson of which is the need of concentration—of turning all our energies into that which has profit in it; spending none upon what is merely of no harm. Nor is this legalism or asceticism: it is, as we may learn from the connection here, what makes for happiness, as well as fruitfulness." What can be more productive of joy than the continual pursuit of that in which Christ finds His own, and and in which we find fellowship with Him?

Shihor-libnath means "diligent search after purity,"—a thing not needless for those to be reminded of who are most diligently seeking fruit. Alas, there will not rarely be the danger of "doing evil," in some modified way, "that good may come"; and the over-anxiety about results may make one misjudge seriously what is the mind of God. God's seed may be a long time buried before it springs up, and the shallower sowing springs up all the quicker. Results will indeed speak truly at the end; but then there must be faith to leave things to the end: and for that the word of God must test all ways and methods, and guide us as to our course in the meantime. Here it is indeed true that "he that believeth shall not make haste." (Isa. xxviii. 16.) What life, with all the glory of it, must seem so vain as Christ's life? The corn of wheat, according to His own saying, had to fall into the ground and die, that it might not abide alone. "Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain":—this would decide for many the failure of it;—"but surely," He adds, "my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. (Isa. xlix. 4.)

And is not this the meaning of the third thing here, that the border from this point "turns *toward the sunrise*, to Beth-dagon"? The sunrise is emphasized by the full expression for it being given, as is not generally the case; and Beth-dagon, as we have already seen, speaks of abundant fruitfulness. But to realize this the day of account must be kept in view, that is, the sunrise, the day of Christ's appearing. And in this way the three names here are very complete in meaning.

We now reach the boundary of Zebulon, and should be prepared to find that in this third stretch of the border of Asher the names speak of the "dwelling" with God and its results:—

"And it reached Zebulon, and the valley of Jiphtah-el, northward at Beth-emek and Neiel."

The theme of Zebulon we have become already acquainted with: it is plain that Asher must be closely connected with it. In God's presence is "fullness of joy." (Ps. xvi. 11.) To know it in whatever measure here must be the bright side of our life; and Asher would be terribly incomplete without the names that follow. The valley of Jiphtah-el we have also had in connection with Zebulon; and the breadth of its significance—"God openeth"—may well be taken in all its fullness. In God's presence His word is opened, and our understandings also, to understand the Word (Luke xxiv. 45); and who that is Christ's does not know the joy attendant upon this? The words following are remarkable and blessed in this connection: the boundary strikes the valley of Jiphtah-el at—

> on the left, and Ebron, [Abdon ?] and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, as far as great Zidon; and the border

Beth-emek, "the house of the depth"; and "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, God hath revealed unto us," says the apostle, "by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the *deep* things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) What happiness to be made at home by the Spirit of God in the deep things of God! But we come also to infinities where man as man cannot go further. He cannot be God, or "as God." He must be limited by his finite nature, and thus—

Neiel, "the shutting of God," in contrast with Jiphtah-el, His "opening," comes as a wholesome warning, to heed which is not without its importance to our happiness. Important it is also to get the right *spiritual* location of this Neiel, if its location on the map cannot be given. To know where we are free to inquire reverently, and where to recognize the limit which must belong to us, is a point of great and needed wisdom. But the whole range of what *is* revealed is ours: "Secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but things which are revealed belong unto us." (Deut. xxix. 29.) To remain in uncertainty where God has really spoken is a shame and dishonor to the grace that has met us; and the plea that we cannot know is but too often the vain plea of indifference and spiritual sloth. Neiel *is* on the boundary of Asher; but we need to take the pains to locate it right.

The fourth and concluding section of the main boundary carries us along the border of Naphtali, northward, as far as Zidon. Naphtali is not, however, mentioned, and has not, spiritually, the nearness to Asher that Zebulon has. This is quite evident; and yet the presence of Naphtali on the northeast border has its significance. There are six names :—

"And it went out to Cabul on the left hand, and Ebron [Abdon?] and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, as far as great Zidon."

The border runs now to the left hand, that is, in a general northerly direction. The first place on the line is—

Cabul, which, taken in connection with the gift of it to Hiram at a later day, is said to mean "given as a pledge [of friendship]," or, better, "in discharge of debt." We have not yet to consider the history, and Cabul itself means simply "bound." It is a significant word at the beginning of the fourth section, which naturally speaks of the walk through the world, and the frank acceptance of it is of great moment in connection with the spiritual happiness which we have seen Asher to represent for us. The constraint of love and gratitude is a sweet yoke to bear; and a life so inspired is of necessity a happy life. Christ died for us, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. v. 15.) Thus is the misery of self-bondage broken, and the moral life set right. We are freest when the moral obligation is most felt; and the constraint of love is motive which ensures happiness. And thus the proposed reading of—

Abdon for Ebron would seem to find strong support. Ebron, akin to Eber of the genealogy of Shem (Gen. xii.) and not to Hebron in Judah, means "passing over." Abdon means "bond-service." Twenty MSS. support the latter, which occurs also in chap. xxi. 30, and in 1 Chron. vi. 74, as one of the Levitical cities of Asher, Ebron occurring nowhere else. The difference between them is only that which our Lord calls a "tittle" (Mat. v. 18), a slight projection or shoulder which distinguishes the "d" in Hebrew from "r." The numerical place speaks strongly for Abdon, as is evident, as does the connection, so that we may provisionally at least accept it. Cabul is thus the recognition of the "bond"; Abdon, the taking up of the "service" it implies; while—

Rehob, "breadth" or "broad way," shows how the soul of the enfranchised saint finds not straitness but largeness in the path with God: these three words fit well, therefore, together.

turned to Ramah, and as far as the fortified city [y] Tyre; and the border turned to Hosah, and ended at the sea,

[y] 2 Sam. 5. 11, 12.

Hammon, "sunny," comes next, under the number of experience, in a similarly beautiful manner; for, whatever the circumstances of the way, the sky ought always to be clear; the heavens cannot fail us.

Kanah, "He has purchased," is the explanation of the whole series here; and it comes under the number which speaks of responsibility, or of God with man;—

Zidon, the end of this part of the line, adding to this the thought of "taking the prey," which is here, as its number indicates, victory over the power of evil. Thus the first division of the border ends.

The second division must not be judged of as to its importance by its length. It has but two names; but it is that which puts Christ before us in direct relation to our happiness:—

"And the border turned to Ramah, and to the fortified city Tyre."

Ramah we have had already, though another city, and in Benjamin; but we have only to transfer the meaning there to find how perfectly it suits in this case also. The meaning is "an elevated place," and points to the acceptance of Christ's work, and the exaltation of Him who had been in the place of humiliation for us. The only difference is that instead of being as there the second city of a second group, it is the *first* city, but still of a second group. This first place speaks of supremacy (as I think), which is His there; and thus indeed the happiness of one who realizes this is secured. It is exactly what the apostle exhorts to, "Rejoice in the *Lord*." (Phil. iv. 1.) If *He* is supreme, surely our blessing is secure. Yet even this is expanded for us in the next name—

Tyre, which means "rock," and to which is added that it is a "fortified city." This, under the number of salvation, reminds us of how Scripture connects these thoughts together. A risen Christ is indeed the "Rock of our salvation," fortified against any possibility of successful attack. How important are these two names among the cities of Asher, and how sufficient as thus joined together!

The third division, as naturally now, speaks of the Spirit and of the work in the soul:

"And the border turned to Hosah; and it ended at the sea by the region of Achzib, and Ummah, and Aphek, and Rehob."

Hosah means "trust," or "taking refuge," clearly corresponding to what was just now said of Christ as the rock of salvation. And we need to be reminded that while "He abideth faithful," faith, too, on our part must abide. We must avail ourselves of our privileges; we must make that our own which *is* our own. How marvelous a thing thus is faith! and what an enriching for the soul of the poor and empty one!

The border now ends at the sea, in the region of Achzib, three names being added here, which are generally taken as from different points, and not belonging to the boundary at all. Aphek, we are told, is the modern Afka a good way to the north. On the other hand, Ummah is supposed to be the modern Alma, not very far from Achzib, and the names recur so frequently as to make their identification often doubtful. It would be quite possible that, as with Zebulon, these three names should be added to the rest, to complete the number of Asher's cities, though there is against this that, after all, this list does not apparently complete them, as Accho (now Acre) properly belonged to Asher, as is plain from Judg. i. 31, although, as with Zidon, Tyre, and other places allotted to them, they failed to get possession. After all, it seems that our appeal must be to the spiritual meaning, which certainly governs all, and that we are left free to accept what explanation of the facts may be thus afforded us.

If the three cities are to be detached from what precedes them, they do not form part of the boundary at all, but must come in, like those of Zebulon, as a distinct fourth section. If they form part of the boundary, then they will belong

by the region of Achzib, and Ummah, and [z]Aphek, and Rehob: twenty-two cities and their villages. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities and their villages.

[z] 1 Sam. 4. 1. 1 Ki. 20. 30.

[f] (32-39.) Naphtali: the overcomer.

(*f*) The sixth lot came forth for the children of [a]Naphtali,—for the children of Naphtali according to

[a] Num. 26. 48-50.

to the third; and their meaning will accord with this: they will speak of the work of the Spirit in some way.

Now Achzib we have already seen to do this. Among the cities of the low country of Judah we found one of this name; and read it as "a flow indeed," referring it to the Spirit of God, as the witness—coming in the second place—of Christ's ascension and glory. It comes exactly in the same place here, and must in consistency receive the same interpretation.

Ummah means "union"; and "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.)

Then Aphek, which is Aphik in Judg. i. 31, though given as "strength" or "fortress,"—there is a monotonous rendering of various names in this way—may rather mean "channel": it is the bed of a stream, whether full or empty.

Rehob, again, we are acquainted with in Asher itself as "breadth," or "broad way."

Now these names put together yield a very consistent sense: for thus it is, as united to Christ by the Spirit, we become channels for what the Lord Himself calls "rivers of living water." (John vii. 38.) Surely this yields so simple and good a meaning that it will hardly be worth while to go further to find another. These names seem to justify their place very fully as part of the third division of the boundary,—all four facing the sea, where it comes to an end. Have we not here full ability to face the sea of trial with the abundant happiness of which Asher speaks? "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit which He hath given us." Asher only goes beyond this to the outflow which the passage in Romans explains but does not openly point out. He fulfills, then, his name all through: let us remember that it is ours also, and challenge ourselves that we fulfill it; for if we will, such is God's grace toward us, we surely may.

The number of the cities, twenty-two, seems here to be too small. There seem twenty-three. Keil suggests, as the only possible explanation, that Neiel in the border may be the same as Neah in Zebulon, and belong to the latter. But may it not be possible that the two Rehobs are in fact the same? The territory of these cities seems to have been sometimes considerable, and the breadth of Asher's portion at this point quite contracted; while the four cities named together may not have been all exactly on the border, which was simply "by" that district. If this suggestion be true, the number twenty-two is exactly right.

(*f*) Naphtali follows Asher in the sixth place: "with divine wrestlings"—wrestlings nerved by God?—says Rachel at his birth, "have I wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed." Hence his name, Naphtali, "my wrestling," which, in the sixth place here, speaks clearly of the *overcomer*. Thus overcoming is the subject presented to us now.

In the case of Naphtali, the boundary is distinguished from the cities of his possession. In the boundary we have, first, what overcoming is; for to define is to bound, to limit. In the second division (the cities), we have presented the helps and hindrances to overcoming.

The boundary is itself divided into two parts, which both end at Jordan. They divide the subject into two parts, the first reminding us of the steadfast-

their families. And their border was from Heleph, from [b] Allon-zaanannim, and Adami-nekeb, and Jabneel, to Lakkum, and ended at the Jordan; and the border turned west to Aznoth-tabor, and went out from thence

[b] Jud. 4. 11.

ness which belongs to overcoming; the second, of the progress which is implied in it. "Steady progress," in a world like this, *means* "overcoming."

"And their border was from Heleph, from Allon-zaanannim and Adami-nekeb, and Jabniel, to Lakkum; and ended at the Jordan." This is the first half.

Heleph means "renewal," and this is the first element of steadfastness. In the strife from which Naphtali warns us we never can escape, the wear and tear incident to it makes it impossible to hold our own, except the constant waste is as constantly repaired. "The inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16), says the apostle. This drawing from divine strength is necessarily the first thing.

"From Allon-zaanannim," the "oak of ladings," the place where loads are put upon the beasts: hence it means, also, "removals"; but the primary thought seems to be all that is needed here. We have a double picture: the oak, which is a type of strength, a strength sustained by just such a process of renewal as we have had already before us; the loading of the beasts of burden, which day by day repeat their tasks and offer themselves to what is laid upon them. Just such daily loads, limited to our strength, and with intervals of relief, have we; and to take up this daily duty,—drudgery as it may seem, and as the figure suggests,—is indeed an essential part of overcoming. In Christian life there are no drones, but all are workers,—no sinecures, but plenty everywhere to do. Earnest, serious application to duty is that which (in the apprehension of God's precious grace) already puts within our grasp the strength alone sufficing. No triflers can be overcomers, and daily duty is a daily discipline and training needed for the conflict that is the lot of us all. Here where the adjusted burden is taken up, the oaks of God are grown indeed.

Adami-nekeb, "the stigma of man," is an accompaniment we shall not miss, if duty have for us the right Christian character. They were the "marks of the Lord Jesus" that Paul bore in his body (Gal. vi. 17) from a world which had rejected Christ. Will any overcomer be without them? Is it not part of the overcoming, in faith to accept our place and portion with Him here, who has given us these with Him in a place where His name has its rightful honor? Without Adami-nekeb there could surely be no prevailing Naphtali at all.

Jabniel, "edification of God," then shows us the other side: in weakness we find how God can build up the soul; for Jabniel comes under the number of weakness. God can surely not fail more than the world in showing His thoughts as to His beloved Son: while beyond the present trial and weakness faith sees the things that are invisible, and looks on—

Lakkum, "to resurrection." "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." (2 Cor. iv. 13, 14.) The briefest reference to the place of this quotation will show how perfectly the names before us keep in the track of the apostle there. The spirit of the overcomer is very clearly, if briefly, expressed. The fifth number here is that which speaks of recompense, while under the sixth the border ends at Jordan, death being the limit of the struggle Naphtali pictures, and already triumphed over by divine grace.

We have now the second and concluding portion:—

"And the border turned westward unto Aznoth-tabor, and went out from thence unto Hukkok; and reached unto Zebulon on the south, and reached Asher on the west, and Judah of Jordan toward the sunrising."

Aznoth-tabor means "ears of purpose,"—hearing that has purpose in it: if

> to Hukkok, and reached to Zebulon on the south, and reached to Asher on the west, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising. And the fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth,

Job could speak of "making covenant with his eyes" (chap. xxxi. 1), a covenant with the ears is no less to be desired. "Take heed *what* ye hear," and "take heed *how* ye hear," are both exhortations from the Lord Himself. (Mark iv. 24; Luke viii. 18.) We are not to be open to all influences, but to be like sensitive plants, recoiling from the contact with evil. An unwalled town is easy of occupation, and a continued exposure to pestilence saps the power of resistance. The company we choose assimilates us to itself, and we are in a world where the "prince of the power of the air" is he who "worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2). How necessary, then, to be at all times, and in all points, controlled by purpose! And this surely leads to—

Hukkok, a "well defined" path, clear cut and straight, to the point it aims at. "I have set the Lord always before me," is that which secures it from deviation and inconsistency. This path connects with Zebulon, "consecration," leads to Asher, "happiness," and finds Judah, "praise," at Jordan,—traveling with the dawn in view, "toward the sunrise." The uncertainty as to this Judah, which perplexes commentators, is, for our purpose, quite unnecessary to be removed, and has no practical existence as a difficulty: the moral lesson is the same. Good progress is there all along this boundary, and triumph all the way.

We now come to the cities, nineteen as they are numbered, sixteen in fact, except some of those upon the boundary are to be reckoned in. The sharp division between the two is against this, as the opposite of this, in the case of Zebulon, tells the other way for it. I know no way to settle this difficulty, the manuscripts and versions being in agreement here. The names seem to speak with less than their usual decisiveness, and it would be easy to imagine the addition of others in certain places without disordering the arrangement of those that we find. Yet it is hard to believe in an absolute loss of this kind, and more reasonable to suppose that the number should be changed.

The cities speak, as already said, of the helps and hindrances to overcoming; yet it is a happy thing to know that hindrances of an external kind may become even helps where there is decision of soul in meeting them. Every difficulty overcome gives fresh assurance for the future, and the wisdom and strength that grow out of experience. The hardiness of the mountaineer has its spiritual counterpart.

The absence of the conjunction, as in other cases, suggests four smaller divisions, one of which again, by its number (ten), would imply another. The *meaning* of ten undoubtedly implies its factors to be five and two; but that it does not follow that it must be so divided is evident by the division of the ten commandments into 4 and 6. We take it here, however, as 5 + 5; and the names will stand, therefore, thus:—

1. Ziddim.
2. Zer and Hammath.
3. { *1.* Rakkath, *2.* Chinnereth, *3.* Adamah, *4.* Ramah, *5.* Hazor; } { *1.* Kedesh, *2.* Edrei, *3.* En-hazor, *4.* Iron, *5.* Migdal-el. }
4. Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh.

Ziddim stands by itself at the head of the list, and means "lying in wait." It might well be the fourth in a series, and allow the three names which may be missing to come before it. As a first, it is indeed hard to characterize it, though, as "the *wiles* of the devil" are what the apostle bids us "stand against" (Eph. vi.), and for which he would have us "put on the whole armor of God," we

and Adamah, and Ramah, and [c]Hazor, and Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor, and Iron, and Migdal-el, Ho- | [c] ch. 11. 1, 10, 11. Jud. 4. 2.

might say that "lying in wait" is the governing thought in that which follows here. It would naturally be a prominent one, inasmuch as Satan is the great adversary, and he always prefers to fight under cover. Deceit and sudden surprises are his tactics: and by these he gains but too frequent advantage.

Zer and Hammath come together in the next place, and are in some respects contrasts. Zer means "strait," "adversity"; Hammath, "heat of the sun," prosperity: both seem, as we can easily understand, adverse really; and the latter often more so than the former: the sun may smite.

The third section is one more difficult to read: it is divided into two parts, and speaks, as it seems to me, of *realization*. Conflict is that by which many truths, perhaps hard for us to learn in the same degree apart from it, are impressed upon us. The two parts here give us, first, realizations as to ourselves with reference to God as *Creator;* second, with reference to God as *Saviour*. These are plainly the two great spheres of relationship. Both series are stamped with the number five, which is that of relationship between God and man.

First of the first five, Rakkath, "emptiness," "vanity." It is the fundamental lesson of all as to man.

Next, Chinnereth, which means "harp," suggests the music of which he may be the instrument, under the divine hand. The harp was used in Israel as the expression of joy and praise, not of lamentation; and this it is for which God made man. Among the Greeks, however, the same word essentially seems to have been used for "lamentation"; and man, yielding himself to other hands than the divine, has fulfilled abundantly this character. The number here may emphasize this contrast, simple to us indeed, and yet transcendantly important. Feeble as man is, He who chooseth the weak things of the world to glorify Himself with, will be at no loss to know how to make him a witness to Himself.

In the third place, Adamah, "ground," carries on the thought. Man is Adam, from *adamah*, "dust from the ground;" and in it every element of all flesh (as that) is found. God has to add to it a higher principle to make it such, and lift it thereby into a higher sphere. Instead of mere chemistry, it is now permeated by vitality, and displays powers wholly foreign to it before. Thus, as in man God has taken up the dust of the earth to raise it above itself and lift it into another sphere, so with man himself, what he is in the old creation is but the shadow of what he shall be in the new creation. The dust of the ground is, as exalted in man, a type and prophecy of man himself.

Ramah, an "elevated place," under the number of "weakness," which governs it (as the numbers govern throughout what they are connected with), gives us, as we might suppose, a very different line of thought. Here the elevation of what still retains the frailty of its origin, sufficiently points the lesson. "Man being in honor, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish," says the psalmist. (Ps. xlix.) God uses this exaltation to point the lesson, uses it to abase pride; not for destruction, but that the creature may learn what is so needful for him. Let him accept it only, and he shall find strength: "to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

Thus Hazor, a familiar word to us, "inclosure," comes in the fifth place, where we find man with God once more. The arms of God are about this feeble creature. There is providential care, the "hedge" about Job, of which Satan so complains,—of which Eden itself was the type at first, and of which the memory survives as a witness to us, a witness for One who abides the same, however much His creature may have wandered from Him. Hazor is indeed not Eden, and yet God is none the less near; and here the first pentad ends, the second coming to re-enforce the teaching of creation with the teaching of redemption, that God may be fully known.

First of the second five, we have Kedesh, "sanctuary." At the southern

rem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh: nineteen cities and their villages. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, according to their families, these cities and their villages.

*g* (40:–48.) Dan the "perfect man."

(*g*) The seventh lot came forth for the tribe of the children of [d] Dan according to their families. And the

[d] Num. 26. 42, 43.

border of Israel we had Kadesh-barnea, the "sanctuary of the wanderer"; here we have Kedesh-naphtali, the "sanctuary of the *struggler*." It is akin, evidently, to Hazor, which we have just had, and in this redemption series implies the rest with which here we begin. Here are enfolding arms that wrap us round, dearer than all providences, however wonderful; and which *are* a "sanctuary,"—holy, and constraining to holiness.

Where our refuge is, there is also, as we know so well, entertainment: Edrei, "plenty of pasture," follows Kedesh, and we are at once reminded of a Shepherd's care. Then we have—

En-hazor, the "spring of inclosure," which in the third place we can have no difficulty in recognizing. Our pastures know no drought; our inclosure has, beyond Eden, its plenteous streams.

In the fourth place, Iron, "fearing," speaks of that which grace, beyond nature or the terrors of law, awakens in the creature brought thus nigh to God. How can it be otherwise? But this does not put at a distance, or make us desire distance: it is simply the creature conscious of creaturehood, as where else should it be so conscious? and which is its safeguard. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom": for God is kept in His place, and man in his; and this is the simple key to true understanding.

In the fifth place, then, we have Migdal-el, "a tower of strength," where El, "strength," is also "God": for, indeed, is there any strength apart from Him? Thus the second series, and the third division of Naphtali's cities, end.

The fourth division has but three names, and these speak, as commonly with the number, of practical walk. Here, first, as implying whole-heartedness, Horem, akin to Hormah, means "devoting to God," and that in general of what could only glorify Him in its destruction. The idols of the land were thus to be unsparingly destroyed by Israel; and there are idols of the heart as evil in God's sight which a true-hearted following of Him will doom no less. The names that follow are read without difficulty, as divine approval of this fidelity to Him:—

Beth-anath, the "house of response," and—

Beth-shemesh, the "house of the sun": neither of them needing interpretation, surely. Here Naphtali's cities end.

(*g*) Now, seventh and last of these tribes (for Levi comes apart, and is not numbered with them), Dan comes, in his own history almost entirely in contrast with what he stands for here. He stands for the spirit of rule,—of judgment in this sense,—which must necessarily begin with *self*-rule, self-judgment. His history, even as he appears in Samson in the next book, is but the expression of the utter want of it. But it is not the history with which we have now to do. We have now God's ideal; the departure from it will be told out in its own place.

Dan's original portion is in the south part of the land, upon the sea-coast, between Ephraim and Judah, some of whose cities come into his possession, and with both of whom he is spiritually connected, as we have already seen. On the east his border is on Benjamin; and the meaning underlies and interprets, as elsewhere, the physical fact. All this has been already briefly shown, and there is nothing that invites repetition in this place. The boundary is not given again, but only the cities: not, therefore, the definition of what he represents, but the contents, the *range* of the "judgment" of which he speaks; and this is broken into two parts, entirely separate, and unequal. For Dan, incompetent to take possession of much of his original allotment, lays hold of Leshem, or

territory of their inheritance was [e] Zoreah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh, and Shaalabbin, [Shaalbim] and [f] Aja-

[e] Jud. 13.25. Jud. 16.31.
[f] ch. 10. 12. 1 Sa. 14. 31.

Laish, in the north, and to it the name of the tribe (or of the father of the tribe) is given. Leshem becomes Dan, and the whole tribe seems identified with this its northern seat, and to put on the northern character. (See Vol. I., pp. 384, 392, *n.*) But this again is history; though here also we find Dan coming after the other northern tribes, as Asher and Naphtali.

Dan comes in the seventh place, as implying spiritual perfection. For the service of rule there must be self-government, and of him who offends not in word James says, "the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (Chap. iii. 2.) Self-government implies the application of truth to the whole man; and thus we see why Dan follows Naphtali. No wonder, too, that the history should so little rise to the ideal, and that even comparatively the failure here should be so great. Not that there is any excuse to be found in this: for the power that man has not is to be found with God.

The cities of Dan's original allotment illustrate "self-government." They are not divided for us by any indication in the text, but are eighteen in number, which would easily divide as three equal series of six each, the number of "mastery" being thus upon the whole: and this is in perfect keeping with the spiritual meaning. For self-government, self-knowledge is a first necessity, knowledge of ourselves being also the knowledge of man everywhere, of the world to which naturally we belong. Thus the first section gives the moral identification of the world in the light of God, the truth convicting and giving power over it. Here, first, we find the names of two of Judah's cities already known to us, although in reverse order to that in which they appear there; in both places, of course, exactly right.

First, Zoreah (which in the common version is given also as Zorah and Zareah), the Hebrew word for "hornet," named from its virulent "stroke," and almost identical with that for leprosy, speaks with sufficient plainness of where all self-knowledge must begin, that plague which is "deeper than the skin," more inveterate and wide-reaching than poison in the blood—the sin that is inbred within us, as leprosy often is.

The second, Eshtaol, "strong woman," comes as the reminder of this. The number is that of succession and dependence (vol. i., p. 321, *n*), and Eve, in her assertion of strength for independence, shows herself, clearly enough, the mother of us all. The Nazarite character in which the man is taught to assume the long hair of woman, is the spiritual judgment of this sin; and Samson, the Danite judge of Israel, is a Nazarite.

But the world goes on merrily enough, heedless as it is helpless really: Ir-shemesh, "the city of the sun," shows it to us in its own way of recovery from the fall. Ir gets its name, according to Parkhurst, from the stir and bustle of the city, which the sun produces, and which dies, too, with the sun. So the world maintains itself with natural things, the goods of the Father's house, not caring that it is far from Him, or indeed glad to be that, and seeking to banish the thought of the night that must be. Poor "city of the sun"! how well the term characterizes it, in its brightness and its brevity, its ephemeral glitter, ignorant and careless of another brighter and eternal glory! One of the phrases of Ecclesiastes, the world's photograph, is a key to the language here—"*under the sun*"!

Shaalabbin, or Shaalbim,—"the MSS.," says Groves, "preponderate in favor of Shaalbim, in which form it is found in two other passages" (Judg. i. 35; 1 Ki. iv. 9),—gives us, under the number of testimony, the truth about it—"*hollow-hearted.*" How willingly men are hypocrites in this respect, while they deceive no one, and least of all themselves!

Ajalon, in the fifth place, speaks of relationship to God, responsibility and recompense; and here the "hart" can only be the figure of timidity and apprehensiveness. That it is used in a good application elsewhere does not in the

lon, and Jethlah, and Elon, and Timnathah, and [g] Ekron, and Eltekeh, and [h] Gibbethon, and Baalath, and

[g] 1 Sa. 5. 10.
[h] 1 Ki. 15. 27.

least prohibit, in a series like the present, one of a different character. This opposite use of the same figure is common enough in Scripture.

Jethlah, "he hangs," concludes as with a cry of pain this first series. It is the spiritual conclusion, for faith characterizing the world, and sealing man's condemnation. "He that hangeth upon a tree is accursed of God"; and the cross of Christ, while faith sees in it the curse taken and removed, shows fully what man is under, what he who believeth not the Son abideth under. Yet it is faith's victory over the world, and may well occupy therefore the place it does: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.)

Thus the first series ends, the second coming now in contrast with it, a contrast to which the last name naturally leads the way. But the last name on this series is also characteristic, as it is that to which the preceding ones work on. Here Baalath, "mistress," is near indeed to "mastery." It is the competency given by redemption for self-government that is the subject of this series. The first name here,—

Elon, a name of the oak, or one of the oaks, of Palestine, signifies the "strong." The oak is everywhere a familiar type of strength. It is so near, also, to one of the names of God (El), as to suggest clearly where alone strength is found, as the number under which it appears also is that of supremacy, and which speaks in an eminent way of Him. To Him all power belongs, and the secret of having it is simply in the faith that lays hold of Him for it; and finds from Him—

Timnathah, "her measured portion." This does not imply, of course, any *scant* measure, but the reverse. *He* measures who knows absolutely our need, and who has full resources as well as love wherewith to meet it. This, then, is complete assurance that there shall be no lack. For our appointed path there can be none; and faith finds its portion along with all needful discipline, and not without difficulties which cast us continually on Himself, and make Him ever more known, ever dearer. How different from the independence of the world!

As to sin in us, the power of it is only thus met, and—

Ekron, "eradication," in the sense in which we have considered it before (page 92), becomes a possibility. Sin is judged, not allowed, does not overpower us. This is self-judgment, self-government, in practical attainment, and the name is central among Dan's cities: it is the heart of what they speak of. Its number in the smaller series is that of "realization."

Eltekeh, "God the object of fear," in the fourth place, that of the creature, shows the proper attitude of such toward the Creator, which the knowledge of grace confirms, not sets aside. "There is forgiveness with Thee," says the psalmist, "that thou mayest be feared." (Ps. cxxx. 4.) Such fear is the invariable accompaniment of nearness to God: he that knows it not has not been near Him.

Gibbethon, "height," stands in the fifth place, where relation to God is expressed. The place that He has given us in Christ makes no interpretation needed. Lastly—

Baalath, "mistress," ends the series in perfect harmony with its character, and the sixth place, in which we find it.

The third series shows us the fruit which is the outcome of this; and here now the first word is—

Jehud, "praise." There is no possibility of power without this, as we have abundantly seen from Jacob's prophecy as to his fourth son onwards. And it is well to remember that in this word "confession" is the form it takes. Confession of what He is is His sufficient praise. With praise in the heart comes activity, of which—

Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon, and Mejarkon, and Rakkon, with the border opposite [t] Japho.
And the territory of the children of Dan extended beyond these. And the children of Dan went up

[t] 2 Chron. 2. 16. Ezr. 3. 7. Jon. 1. 3. Acts 9. 36.

Bene-berak, "sons of lightning," naturally speaks: no half-hearted or hesitating service, surely; but prompt, energetic, decisive. No dull moderation of speech is sufficient to express the enthusiastic devotedness which becomes the servants of the Most High God, and the followers of Him who was the perfect Servant. Men may think such speech as this extravagant; but it is not so: "a son of lightning" means, in the language of a Hebrew, one taught of this to do the will of God as the elements of Nature do it, which curb and humble the pride of man with the assurance of what is high above it: "who hath resisted His will?"

In the third place we have —

Gath-rimmon, "the wine-press of the pomegranate," a figure not difficult to understand. If the pomegranate speak of the gospel of God, the *wine* of the pomegranate is the reviving power of the Word, its sweet, refreshing, stimulating influence, in which, however, there is no excess. The soul of the believer, is it not just that which by meditation and communion with God becomes the wine-press of His Word? And Dan in his "rule," whether of himself or others, needs ever this Word to be in him in its strength. Without it there can be no ability to serve aright, with promptitude and decision such as the last word expressed.

Hence now, too, and in this way only, can we reach—

Mejarkon, or Mei-hajarkon, "waters of greenness, verdure," not waters themselves green, as the commentators mostly suppose, but which sustain greenness. Thus the connection with what has gone before is plain, while the figure of necessity changes. The connection is much as between the Lord's words to the woman of Sychar, and those to the people at the feast of tabernacles. To the one he speaks of "living water springing up" within the believer; to the others of "rivers of living water" flowing forth out of the belly — the inward parts. (John iv. 14; vii. 38.) The last is blessing for others, which naturally follows blessing for one's self. Here, too, Dan's service of rule is in as manifest relationship as the waters at Beer with the "ruler's staff" with which they were digged. (Num. xxi. 18.)

What follows is more difficult. The next word, "Rakkon," or, more exactly, Ha-Rakkon, has been supposed by Grove (in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible) to be a mere error, inexactly repeating the previous Ha-jarkon. The Septuagint omits it, but is itself so inexact in all this part as to be of no real authority if taken alone. Then the change of language "with the border opposite Japho": does this stand in a sixth, or as part of the fifth division? Does it mean that Dan's border *ends* opposite Japho (Joppa), or does "border" stand as sometimes for "region" or "territory"?

The last question seems as if it must be answered affirmatively, since there is no mention of a border elsewhere in Dan, and the *end* of a border has through all this part one form of expression, literally the "going out"; the spiritual interpretation also confirms the meaning of "territory," or "region."

Next Japho means, as I take it, "what is fair (beautiful) to Him," and would naturally come into a fifth place, not a fourth or sixth; while the clause in which it is found is surely a dependent, not an independent, one. Thus Rakkon would be required before it, and the omission in the Septuagint be an error, not an emendation. Thus, although there are still six *names* in this third section of Dan's cities, there are but five divisions.

Putting these names together, now, we shall find in them a contrast which is in perfect harmony. Rakkon means "leanness," and the sentence would read as "leanness, along with that which is before (or has respect to) what is fair to

against [j]Leshem, and fought against it, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and took possession of it, and dwelt in it, and called Leshem Dan, after the name of Dan their father. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities and their villages.

[j] Jud. 18. 29.

[h] (49-51.) Joshua: Christ's portion.

(*h*) And they ended dividing the land for inheritance according to its borders. And the children of Israel gave to [k]Joshua the son of Nun an inheritance among them: according to the word of Jehovah they gave him the city that he asked, Timnath-serah in the hill-country of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it.

[k] *cf.* Eph. 1. 18.

The Levitical garrison.

These were the inheritances that Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the

Him." That is, the soul, while conscious of its nothingness, seeks that which is pleasing in the sight of God.

These are the cities of Dan's original portion. Beyond these, however, they had another territory, which, in fact, their own inability to lay hold of what God had given them, compelled them to seek. The failure is, however, not related here, but in the book of Judges. Here we have only the fact of the conquest of Leshem (in Judges called Laish) in the north of the land. They call it Dan, as if in it, in some way more than elsewhere, the character of the tribe was expressed; and from its possession here, we find it, in fact, put along with the northern tribes in this enumeration.

But of what does this solitary city in the north speak? There is but one name, in fact, to add anything to what we have had before, and that name is one which is displaced and passes away before the later one with which we are familiar. Dan, as the name of true rule, is "judgment"; and this is but "discernment," the realizing of the nature of things and pronouncing accordingly. What, then, is the Canaanite city which passes away before it? It is Leshem, "glitter," the vain show of ambitious authority with which self-seeking man is charmed, the tinsel of greatness, which the glory of Christ has shamed forever for him who knows it. "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; but ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke xxii. 25–27.)

True rule is ever service, putting things in their place and giving them their proper meaning: the rod is the shepherd's rod, guided by love and beneficent; for which there must be reality—things taken for what they are. But this rule cannot be under the Zidonians, the takers of prey; the true Dan, the Judge of men, must come, and the world fall under Him, up to the last careless and secure as with the Canaanites in this case. "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night." "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. xxiv. 38, 39.) Judgment thus must clear the scene, that true rule may be established: in Christ alone will it be seen in its perfection.

(*h.*) The assignment of an inheritance to Joshua closes the history of these apportionments. The word of Jehovah assigns to him the city that he asks, namely, Timnath-serah, in the hill-country of Ephraim. Timnath-serah means simply "an abundant portion." Who can say what Christ's portion is now —for of this the division at this time speaks,—as "anointed with the oil of

tribes of the children of Israel, divided by lot in Shiloh before Jehovah, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And they ended the apportionment of the land.

(XX., XXI.)

a (xx.) The cities of refuge: grace preservative.

6. (*a*) And Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Assign you the [l]cities of refuge of which I spake unto you by the hand of Moses, that the slayer may flee thither who smiteth a person mortally without intent, unwittingly; and they shall be a refuge for you from the avenger of blood. And he shall flee unto one of these cities, and stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; and they shall take him unto them into the city, and give him a place to dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand: because he smote his neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not previously. And he shall dwell in that city, having stood before the assembly for judgment, until the death of the high-priest that may be at that time: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and to his house,—to the city whence he had fled.

l Ex. 21. 13. Nu. 35. 11. De. 19. 2. 9. *cf.* Heb. 6. 18.

And they sanctified [m]Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill-

m Jud. 4. 6.

gladness above" his "fellows?" That of Joshua is spoken of as but a barren inheritance; but how could anything be added to Him to whom already all things belong? It is satisfaction given to His heart that alone could recompense Him; and this He has, though as yet but the earnest of that which will be.

Yet the victory on His part is gained once for all; and He has entered into heaven itself, our Representative and Forerunner. This is the beginning of that which abides eternally; and this the number of the section marks.

(vi.) The ordinance of the cities of refuge, and the assignment of the Levitical cities evidently belong to one section. The cities of refuge formed a part of those given to the Levites, and were connected, as much in spiritual meaning as they were in fact, with Levite ministry. In both we find a provision for the control of sin: the Levitical cities thus scattered through the land being like a garrison of the Lord to maintain the people in the knowledge and fear of Him.

(*a*) There are, however, thus two quite distinct parts: the ordinance of the cities of refuge, and how it was carried out, being the first part; the assignment of the Levitical cities coming in the second. The order here is not hard to read, the cities of refuge being indeed the expression of the grace of God to Israel themselves, as we have seen, while applying to us also; the Levitical cities being for the maintenance of ministry, which would have been their salvation as a nation, had they hearkened to it, and had not the ministry itself betrayed its trust.

The law of Numbers xxxv. is with more brevity repeated here. We must refer to the notes upon the previous passage for the spiritual application. We have then the cities appointed in Canaan, with the enumeration of those beyond Jordan also, which have been already before us (see the notes on Deut. iv. 41–43). Comparing them together, we shall find, in the first series, the divine side of salvation, the display of God in it; in the second series, the human side, the salvation itself. Of the three Canaan cities we have —

First, "Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill-country of Naphtali." Galilee means "circle," or "circuit,"— reminding us of Eglon, and of Gilgal, to both of which

country of Naphtali, and [n] Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and Kirjath-Arba, that is, [o] Hebron, in the hill-country of Judah. And beyond the Jordan of Jericho, toward the [sun]rise, they assigned [p] Bezer in the wilderness, in the tableland, out of the tribe of Reuben, and [q] Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and [r] Golan in Bashan of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that he who smiteth any one mortally without intent might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the assembly.

[b] (xxi.) The designation of the Levitical cities.

(*b*) And the heads of the fathers of the Levites drew near unto Eleazar the priest and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes

[n] Gen. 33. 18. ch. 24. 1. Jud. 9. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 12. 1. Ps. 60. 6.

[o] Gen. 13. 18. Nu. 13. 22. 2 Sam. 2. 1, etc.

[p] De. 4. 43.

[q] 1 Kings 22. 3, 4, 6. 2 Kings 9. 1, 4, 14.

[r] Deu. 4. 43.

it is near akin. The wheel of God's government, as we have seen in the case of Eglon (page 62), is for the abasement of man, writing vanity upon him, but for his ultimate blessing when he accepts what is the stamp upon and judgment of his sin. Thus Galilee speaks of God's ways with man to bring him to repentance; and Kedesh-Naphtali, the "sanctuary of the struggler," as found in Galilee, shows how God has met the restlessness of heart which He Himself has awakened, with a refuge and rest in which man is still and forever abased, and He is glorified. The prodigal's return to his Father is the fruit of a coming to himself, which the exhaustion of his own resources, the famine in the far-off land, the misery of hunger sought to be satisfied with swine's food, have all combined to bring about. But in these things also the Shepherd has been already seeking the sheep, and the Father devising means whereby His banished may be restored to Him. Man is blessed, but blessed in being humbled; and God's righteousness is owned in man's confession of unrighteousness.

The second city is "Shechem, in the hill-country of Ephraim." Here the names are simple enough, and have been again and again before us. Shechem is "shoulder," that which bears the burden, and is the easily read type of "service." On each side of it stood mounts Ebal and Gerizim, whence the curses and blessings of the law were published after Israel entered into the land. Here, therefore, the city of refuge speaks of Christ as the servant of God and doing His will, hearkening to the voice of the law, and even (though Himself perfect) to the curses for the breach of it: magnifying and making it honorable by His submission to a penalty which others had incurred. Thus again God was glorified in the cross, and the divine side of His work appears.

Thirdly, "Kirjath-arba, that is, Hebron in the hill-country of Judah," presents "communion" to us in a new and striking form. It is in this aspect, and in the third place among these cities, Christ, as the One in whom "all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily," and in whom thus

"All the mind in heaven is one,"

as we see it in the three parables of the fifteenth of Luke. That Kirjath-arba, the Anakite name of the city before Israel had it, and named from their great man Arba, should be still mentioned here, may be intended to point the contrast with this other Man, whose flesh was the tabernacle of Deity.

The second series of refuge-cities on the other side of Jordan plainly insist, as has been already said, upon the salvation side of the same story. The meanings will be found elsewhere. (Vol. I., p. 540–541, *n.*)

(*b*) The Levitical cities are next assigned by lot, as the Lord had commanded. We have first, separately, the mention of the respective tribes, out of which the different families of Levi received their portions, and then the enumeration of the cities in full. The priestly family receives thirteen cities out of Judah,

of the children of Israel, and spake unto them in Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, Jehovah commanded by the hand of Moses to give us [s]cities to dwell in, and pasturage for our cattle. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, according to the word of Jehovah, these cities and their pasturage.

[s] Num.35.2. 1 Chron. 6. 54, etc.

And the lot came forth for the families of the [t]Kohathites:—and the children of Aaron the priest, of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin thirteen cities. And the rest of the children of Kohath had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities. And the children of [u]Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. The children of [v]Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulon, twelve cities. [w]And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities and their pasturage, as Jehovah had commanded by the hand of Moses.

[t] Num. 4. 4.

[u] Nu. 4. 24.

[v] Num.4.31.

[w] Lev. 25. 32.

And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon,

Simeon, and Benjamin; and this is easy to understand, except as to the number. For the priests look Godward, as ministry, typified in the order of Levites, does manward; and these tribes (though with a certain difference as to Benjamin, which we shall find recognized in its place) do the same. The other Kohathites, typifying objective ministry, receive ten cities out of Ephraim, Dan, and half Manasseh, the reason for which as to the first and the last is evident; while Dan, too, subjective as the two others, requires the Kohathite ministry to maintain ability for self-judgment. Gershon, the subjective ministry, has thirteen cities in Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and half Manasseh: for practical walk, happiness, overcoming, need the lesson of strangership that he can teach them, while he has only to confirm in it the other and eastern half of Manasseh. Merari, finally, has his twelve cities out of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulon, to check the excess of individuality in all of them, and lead them into the apprehension of those relationships in which this finds its proper sphere and complement.

The cities are now enumerated according to these four divisions of the Levites, which are strictly three: the priestly, and the simple Kohathite, the Gershonite, and the Merarite.

First, the children of Aaron; and here the cities out of Judah and Simeon are distinguished from those out of Benjamin, for a reason which is easily to be discovered. Judah, as exemplifying worship, leads Simeon, that is, communion; and the two must not be separated. Benjamin, though holding fast to Judah also, yet extends toward Ephraim. Thus while the two former tribes furnish nine cities to the priests (the usual 3 x 3, the divine number emphasized), the number of Benjamin's cities is four, that of the creature. We shall see more as to this directly.

The cities of Judah and Simeon stand, then, as follows:—

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | *1.* Hebron, | 2. | *1.* Eshtemoa, | 3. | *1.* Ain (or Ashan), |
| | *2.* Libnah, | | *2.* Holon, | | *2.* Juttah, |
| | *3.* Jattir; | | *3.* Debir; | | *3.* Beth-shemesh. |

these cities which are mentioned by name, which the children of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites, of the children of Levi had,—for theirs was the first lot. And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which is [x]Hebron in the hill-country of Judah, and its pasturage round about; and the fields of the city and the villages thereof gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. And they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron and her pasturage to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and [y]Libnah and her pasturage; and Jattir and her pasturage; and Eshtemoa and her pasturage; and Holon and her pasturage; and Debir and her pasturage; and Ain and her

[x] ch. 14. 14.

[y] ch. 15. 42.

The whole series is headed by a city of refuge, specially emphasized, as it would seem, by the repetition, first, as the city of Arba, the father of Anak, and then as the refuge for the manslayer. In the latter character we have just seen its meaning, where also it is called Kirjath-arba. A divine Man has taken the place of him who exemplifies the pride and independence of man's heart as fallen; and in Him the whole counsel of God is found. Hebron, as expressing thus the communion of the whole Godhead, naturally fills the first place in the series. How blessed and wonderful a portion for the priests of God!

The second name, Libnah, "whiteness," we have had like Hebron several times already. Where it first comes before us as a city taken by Joshua, it represents, as we have seen, separation from evil (page 66). Where we find it again, among Judah's cities in the lowland, it still retains this meaning, but applies to Christ entering into the sanctuary, clad in the white linen garment of the priest (page 106). Here it speaks similarly of the absolute purity of the Mediator, "the Man, Christ Jesus."

But there is in Him what no one can utter, the glory of Him who "dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see"; and this we have found to be the thought in—

Jattir, "he far excels," a town in the hill-country, notice, as Libnah is in the lowland. Had we not this name here, something would still be wanting to the expression of the glory of Christ: thus revealed as, in His own Person, the blessed portion of the priests of God.

The second three cities seem still to speak of Christ, but in His service among men. Here we have—

First, Eshtemoa, "obedience," the Father's will the motive and governing principle of His life.

Then, the number of humiliation brings us to Holon, "night-lodging on the sand."

Thirdly, Debir, "oracle," a familiar word, gives us what He was in the world, the one perfect divine voice in it. We must not separate what are united here, the absolute obedience to the will of God, with the personal knowledge of human circumstances and sorrows, which, so far as they are found in those who follow Him, will enable them also, in their measure, to "speak as oracles of God." So He declares of Himself, by the prophet: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught." (Isa. l. 4, R. V.) How blessed and comforting for us this language of One who, God over all, blessed forever, is yet not ashamed to call us brethren! The three names here have a real inward connection.

The third three, on the other hand, in accordance with their numerical significance, go on to resurrection and the heavenly place. The first name here in Joshua is Ain, but 1 Chr. vi. 59 reads Ashan. Both are among Simeon's cities,

pasturage; and Juttah and her pasturage; Beth-shemesh and her pasturage: nine cities out of those two tribes.

And out of the tribe of [z]Benjamin, Gibeon and her pasturage, Geba and her pasturage, [a]Anathoth and her pasturage, and Almon and her pasturage: four cities. All the cities of the sons of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities, and their pasturage.

And the families of the children of [b]Kohath, the Levites that remained of the children of Kohath, they had of their lot cities of the tribe of [c]Ephraim. And

z ch. 18. 11. etc.

a 1 Ki. 2.26. Jer. 1. 1. Ezr. 2. 23. Jer. 32. 7.

b ver. 4, etc.

c ch. 16.

but one would seem to be a mistake. Commentators generally prefer the latter, and the context inclines us to it. Ain, as we have there interpreted it (p. 100), does not seem appropriate; but Ashan, "smoke," referring, as it seems (see p. 107), to the smoke of incense, is perfectly so. He whom we have seen below in His ministry among men, is now above, still engaged for them; the number showing how that "obedience" of His below becomes a sweet savor in behalf of His own above.

Then Juttah, "enlargement," may speak of the coming in of the Gentiles, with the new hopes of a heavenly people, united with Christ above; while—

Beth-shemesh, "the house of the sun," may well represent divine glory in the face of Jesus, as we now behold it, by faith, in heaven. Thus the third series is complete.

We now come to the Benjamite cities, which are four in number, the number of the creature: for Benjamin, "Christ in us," unites, as we have seen, the subjective with the objective. Benjamin, even dispensationally, is thus Christ in power on the earth; and the truth individually applied is hardly different: the effect of Christ known in glory is seen in power for a walk on earth. Correspondingly, these four names divide as 2 x 2,—the first portion speaking of Christ Himself, the latter of the effect in us. Here—

First of the first two, Gibeon, "the pit of suffering for iniquity," represents, as before (p. 133), the cross. The second, Geba, "hill," we have also seen as the "hill that is higher than I," the recourse of the saint in trial, and which is, of course, Christ exalted. These two things are characteristic of the Benjamite condition. Christ crucified crucifies us to the world; Christ glorified lifts us above it. This is power for the walk on earth.

The next two are Anathoth and Almon, and they correspond respectively to the two former. Anathoth, "afflictions," answers naturally to Gibeon, the cross. We have to take up *our* cross,—how different to His, however,—and to follow Him. Almon, "concealment," answering to Geba, speaks of a "life hid with Christ in God," the effect of a heart occupied with a hidden Saviour. The world that knows Him not cannot know the life inspired by Him, though they may be quite conscious of a power they know not.

These are the priests' cities; those of the simple Kohathite-Levites follow next. Here, first, they have out of Ephraim four cities, a number which we have had in connection with Benjamin, and which now prevails with only one exception, that of Naphtali, which has three. Manasseh furnishes two to Kohath and two to Gershon.

The Kohathite cities give us the character of an *objective* ministry, such as we have before seen this family to represent. (Vol. I., pp. 397, 400, 401.) Those out of Ephraim declare it to us as a ministry of *power;* the Danite ones as a ministry of *confirmation;* the Manassite as one of *revival.* These characters unite easily together, and show objective ministry as what is typical ministry, ministry of the highest kind; and no one that has experience of it but knows it to be that; Gershon and Merari have their needful place, but with Kohath are the

they gave them Shechem and her pasturage in mount Ephraim, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Gezer and her pasturage, and Kibzaim and her pasturage, and Beth-horon and her pasturage: four cities.

And out of the tribe of [d] Dan, Eltekeh and her pas- [d] ch. 19. 40. etc.

ark and mercy-seat, the altars, the table of shew-bread, the lamp of the sanctuary, and even the veil, things of which we know in measure the meaning and value. They speak of Christ Himself in person and work, and upon this all else must depend.

The first name among the Ephraimite portion is again that of a city of refuge, Shechem, "shoulder," that which bears the burden, and which represents, as this, Christ as the Servant of God's will, for us the Burden-bearer, or indeed bearing us, as the Shepherd the lost sheep, according to His own parable. Here indeed is power, a power outside ourselves equal to all emergencies—to every possible demand upon it. Thus "the government is upon His shoulder," as fully competent.

Next we have Gezer, "cutting off, isolation," a word which directly reminds us of the "land cut off" to which the scape-goat bears the sins of Israel on the day of atonement. This goes beyond the city of refuge, a place of shelter, but no more. Here the sins themselves are gone, never to be found again. Justification is full and entire. Peace is made, never more to be broken. Hence a way is made for God to display the love that is in His heart, and to gather His people; and—

Kibzaim shows us a "double gathering," as also the day of atonement does. "He died for that nation (Israel), and not for that nation only, but also that He might gather together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad." (John xi. 51, 52.) The Church it is that comes now at the present time upon the ground of sins put away. And here power is realized by us; for the knowledge of grace is the attainment of power.

Yet sin is dealt with also, in the saint as well as in the sinner; and this Beth-horon, "the house of wrath," comes fittingly to assure us of. Beth-horon is *double*—there is an upper and a lower city; and we have had to distinguish these already (page 118.) The *nether* Beth-horon is judgment as it falls upon the impenitent and unbeliever. The upper is judgment (and thus wrath) against *sin*, though assuming for the believer the form of chastening mercy. "For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.)

This *double* city has thus the full character of witness-warning against the *abuse* of grace, while it limits not in the least the grace itself. The names thus closed show us in this way the real elements of a ministry of power, and are all *objective*, and suit Kohath well. They are guard and guide to fruitful Ephraim no less, as is easy to be seen.

But we come now to Dan, and shall find, according to what is expressed in him, the *subjective side* of an *objective ministry*. Dan is intensely subjective, and something of this must be found in all that is really ministry at all. We shall see how it is, in fact, that which comes in to *confirm*, not displace or modify, the former; and thus to confirm, also, the soul itself.

Here, first, Eltekeh, "God the object of fear," gives us the constant, only right, attitude of the soul in His presence. Whatever weakens this condemns itself. Does grace weaken this? Nay, it only gives it its proper character as filial, not servile, fear: "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayst be feared." God is not less on the throne, but more; for the rebellion of the will is vanquished, and the heart bows with the head. This character of grace needs to be well understood, and with many is not, simple as it really is. The main cavil against grace it is that is here overthrown indeed, and the gospel buttresses itself against all attack. Worthy is Eltekeh of a first place.

turage, Gibbethon and her pasturage, Ajalon and her pasturage, Gath-rimmon and her pasturage: four cities.

And out of the half tribe of [e]Manasseh, Taanach and her pasturage, and Gath-rimmon and her pasturage: two cities. All the cities were ten, with their pasturage, for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

e ch. 17. 1, etc.

Next, Gibbethon, "height," which we have already found applying to our relation to God in Christ, comes in as a second bulwark against the moralist's objection. Our place in Christ gives us at once the basis of our walk, and power for it. To walk in Him is to walk as He walked, but it is to walk also as dependent upon and drawing from Him. It is that abiding of the branch in the vine that makes it fruitful. Occupation with Himself is deliverance from the power of the world and sin.

In the third place, Ajalon, "the place of harts," suggests the agile, yet firm, tread of this animal, with reference to which it is said, "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places." (Ps. xviii. 33.) The "high places" belong to the weakest believer; but we need to be made competent to occupy them,—the firm, sure tread of the hart upon the mountains. It is but the realizing power of faith that is needed for this; of which the number here may remind us. It is but to take God at His word; and if the blessed place be ours, to fill the place.

Then Gath-rimmon, the "winepress of the pomegranate," speaks to us once more of the animating power of the word of God, which can only, when the soul is thus established, do its proper work, and enrich and exalt all its faculties. The fourth place in which we find this name affirms these results as facts of experience. They are truly the experience of every one who lives and walks in communion with God. This closes the list of Dan's cities.

In Manasseh's possessions on the west of Jordan, Kohath has only two cities, Taanach and another Gath-rimmon. For the last, Chronicles substitutes Bileam, a transposition of Ibleam, as generally supposed: one of the towns that Manasseh receives from Asher or from Issachar, but fails to take out of the hands of the Canaanites. The Septuagint has a different name here from both, however, and criticism seems able to determine nothing: for Gath-rimmon may be another name for Bileam, the recurrence of names and the duplication of them being alike common, and we must not too readily suppose that a copyist's error which has in its favor all the Hebrew copies. Altogether, we are free to ask what the spiritual interpretation may have to say in the matter, and have no decisive reason for refusing to submit ourselves entirely to its guidance.

With the meaning of Manasseh we are well acquainted. Its "forgetting" is in order to pressing on, and is closely linked with Ephraim's "fruitfulness." Some connection with this should appear in these two cities, which, in becoming Levitical do not cease to be Manassite.

Again, as two is the number of contrast, a dual division like this will often be found to show this. Taanach and Gath-rimmon may thus give contrasted thoughts, as indeed "sandy soil" and the pomegranate naturally suggest. It does not need that Taanach should be a desert to suggest the thought of it; and besides, the sand of the desert is spiritually fruitful, and intended so to be. God meant the wilderness to teach Israel the grand lesson of faith; and for us He means the world as that to wean us from other dependencies than Himself, and make us look on to our rest. Thus Taanach's sandy soil may be really fruitful, and not the less typical on that account, while Gath-rimmon may show us where faith finds refreshment and stimulus for the way that leads to God.

The numbers are in accordance with such an interpretation: for *one* is the number of solitariness, and thus barrenness; while two is that of the Word and of ministry. Interpretation would thus, I judge, decide for Gath-rimmon as the

> And for the children of Gershon of the families of the Levites: out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan and her pasturage, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Beeshterah and her pasturage: two cities.

true reading. Bileam and Ibleam have substantially the same meaning, and that the same as that of the unfaithful prophet. Bileam is only Balaam; and if this is substituted for Gath-rimmon I see no proper sense. Taanach and Gath-rimmon harmonize, also, perfectly with the lesson of Manasseh, as is manifest; and this cumulative witness may well be decisive of the question of criticism.

The Gershonite cities are thirteen in number, and they belong to four tribes—Manasseh, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali. Manasseh comes first,—the half-tribe east of Jordan,—and again with two cities, Golan and Be-eshterah.

As with Kohath, so with Gershon, a city of refuge heads the list. Golan is "exultation," the fullness of joy in Christ Jesus that marks the true circumcision. (Phil. iii. 3.) Gershon, the "exile," is near akin in spirit, evidently, to Manasseh, "forgetter," and for each joy is a needful element of strength; the joy in One who is absent: as Peter expresses it, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." (1 Pet. i. 8.) For a Levite, also, how necessary a possession such as this! A joy in Christ that is "full of glory," is in itself a ministry of Christ to men; and we are admonished to be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." (Col. iii. 16.)

Be-eshterah is given in Chronicles as Ashtaroth, and the mass of commentators follow Gesenius in considering the prefix "be" as an abbreviation of "beth," understanding the compound word to mean "the house of Ashterah," or "Ashtoreth." There *was*, as we know, an Ashtaroth in Manasseh, the old city of Og; and, according to the testimony of Eusebius and Jerome, more than one, so that the one before us need not have been the heathen capital. *Is* it the "house of Ashterah"? The abbreviation of "beth" into "be" is more than doubtful; no certain example can be given of such a change; and it is not likely that Israel, when they changed similar names because of their connection with idolatry (Num. xxxii. 38) would allow one like this to stand. It might be, indeed, here mentioned by its old heathen name after it had acquired another; but in such cases the new name would naturally, at least, be given with it, as with "Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim" (ch. xv. 60).

But if it be not the heathen name, what is it? "Ashteroth" is, indeed, found four times in Deuteronomy (ch. vii. 13; xxviii. 4, 18, 51), translated in the common version "flocks," and in the revised version "young"; by others, again (much better), "ewes"; while Young gives "multiplications." Perhaps all consider it as a mere adaptation of the heathen word; which seems, however, strange enough as that. The greater probability would surely be that the heathen goddess took her name from, rather than gave it to, the ewes of the flock.

If this be admitted, the *be* may be what grammarians call the *beth essentiæ*, a simple emphasizing of the word which follows it; and which, in its idea, Dr. Young's translation gives as "multiplication." This agrees with the number of "increase," under which it stands, and yields a simple sense in connection with Golan: for the joy in Christ, which is "full of glory," is, indeed, nothing else than the sunshine of His face, while "*from* glory *to* glory" expresses the necessity of progress in the soul to whom Christ is thus unveiled. This is obviously, also, a thought quite in accordance with what is represented by Manasseh, and seems thus additionally worthy of acceptance as the thought here.

These two express, therefore, for Gershon, the "exile," that which separates his strangership from mere asceticism, and shows the spring of power which is in it. And now Issachar, who speaks of the earth-walk, furnishes to him in its

And out of the tribe of [f]Issachar, Kishion and her pasturage, Daberath and her pasturage, Jarmuth and her pasturage, Engannim and her pasturage: four cities.

[f] ch. 19. 17, etc.

And out of the tribe of [g]Asher, Misheal and her pasturage, Abdon and her pasturage, Helkath and her pasturage, Rehob and her pasturage: four cities.

[g] ch. 19. 24, etc.

And out of the tribe of [h]Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee and her pasturage, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Hammoth-dor and her pasturage, and Kartan and her

[h] ch. 19. 32, etc.

four cities the means of preservation of this power amid the adverse influences of the world. These cities are—

First, Kishion, "hardening," which, as a Levitical and Gershonite city, naturally changes its significance, and shows us what the very opposition of the world may do for us, as begetting in us force of character and independent individuality, which dares to stand alone, in single obedience to the will of God. All difficulties are but a discipline to the soul in earnest. The habit of overcoming can be acquired, like other habits; and thus adverse circumstances may be none the less helpful,—God making, as He has promised, all things work together for good to them that love Him. Thus Kishion is, after all, not so strange a word to find beside—

Daberath, "pasture"; for there are "pastures of the wilderness," and the world being what it is only makes the refreshment He has provided for it sweeter and more satisfying. There is grace always equal to the need also, where the heart turns with its need to Him. Then we have—

Jarmuth, "height," which we have seen once to speak of Christ exalted, and once of our own exaltation in Him,—things that naturally go together. From this height, one may say, is fed—

Engannim, the precious "spring of" God's "gardens," where His plants are nurtured. With all these thoughts we are familiar; and their study in these new connections must be left very much to be worked out by those who care for it. Where there is not such care, volumes might be written in vain.

Asher follows Issachar; and here again all the names have been before us. We need not wonder that the first Gershonite town should be—

Misheal, "feeling after God"; nor the second—

Abdon, "bond-service"; the third is—

Helkath, "equal division"; and the fourth—

Rehob, "room." These four, where God is known and relation to Him established, are all blessedness, and worthy, therefore, of Asher. They show us the portion of the true Levite, which is in God Himself, and the heart of ministry such as the Levite speaks of.

Lastly, out of Naphtali Gershon has three cities. Naphtali, the triumphant struggler, and in the fourth place here, speaks clearly of *experience*, a thing quite necessary to the ministering Levite, and with which he, too, is called to minister. Here—

Kedesh in Galilee, a city of refuge, the soul's sanctuary-rest in self-humiliation before God, is the first sweet lesson of experience,—a lesson how blessed for the soul that has learned it,—how blessed, therefore, to enrich others with! Then—

Hammoth-dor, "heat of the dwelling,"—*sun*-heat. It may be the Hammath which we have had as one of the cities of Naphtali already (page 154), although here a plural, which intensifies the thought, and with Dor attached. The spiritual meaning is self-evident.

Kartan, in the third place, is considered to be a contraction of Kirjathaim, "two cities," or the double city, and would seem to speak of fellowship in

pasturage: three cities. All the cities of the Gershonites, according to their families, were thirteen cities and their pasturage.

And for the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites: out of the tribe of [t] Zebulon, Jokneam and her pasturage, and Kartah and her pasturage, Dimnah and her pasturage, Nahalal and her pasturage: four cities.

[t] ch. 19. 10, etc.

And out of the tribe of [j] Reuben, Bezer and her pas-

[j] ch. 13. 15, etc.

activity; and this would not be unsuited, perhaps, as a name for any Levite city, but yet especially appropriate in this place. Here the Gershonite cities end.

The Merarite cities are twelve in number, and furnished by three tribes,—Zebulon, Reuben, and Gad. We have already (vol. i., p. 397, sq.) seen that Merari's ministry speaks of that which has to do with the maintenance of the Church itself; and this is why, perhaps, its cities are twelve, the number of *manifest* divine government. Alas, we have lost much this manifestation in the multiplicity of human rules and machinery that have been introduced, and the self-will that breaks all bounds continually. Few Merarites, in truth, seem to remain to the Church, but here in Joshua we have the divine thought, not the human failure; and the twelve cities are in accordance with this.

The first tribe that furnishes cities to the Merarite is Zebulon: for *dwelling with God*, which implies practical consecration to Him, is here first of all important for the upholding of His claim upon men. The cities are, first,—

Jokneam, "possession of the people,"—for the first need on the part of His people is to be put in possession of what is theirs from God. We have next—

Kartah, "city," which implies fellowship, living activity, and yet boundary-lines preserved, care being taken that these in the church of God are of divine establishment, marked out by the word of God alone. We have next—

Dimnah, "dung," for which, in 1 Chr. vi. 62, there seems to be substituted Rimmon (or Rimmono), a word with which we are familiar, and of much pleasanter suggestion than the word before us. The change in the Hebrew is such as might come through slight corruption of the text, but Keil rightly reminds us that in Chronicles we have but two cities here instead of four; and the other, Tabor, is not found here either. Remmon, or Rimmon, is found, however, in Zebulon, while Dimnah occurs nowhere else than in this passage: thus on both sides there are things to be considered.

Rimmon, standing for the "word of God," as the pomegranate typifies it, would imply the holy fruitfulness which it produces. Dimnah could only, as it would seem, point out the need of apprehension of that which defiles, as part of true Levite ministry in the church of God, most necessary for the Merarite. This would suit well, also, the numerical place which speaks of sanctification. On the whole, Dimnah seems to give the clearer spiritual thought; and which, being in the text also, we must prefer. The last word here,—

Nahalal, a "place whither they lead" cattle to pasture, suggests very different thoughts. *Nahal* means "to lead with gentleness and care" (Wilson); and such a tender helpfulness must, indeed, characterize the Merarite ministry. True love must govern all, acting oftentimes in ways that may seem even opposed to one another, but are not: it is the "bond of perfectness."

Reuben next furnishes her quota: the subject will of faith is, indeed, necessary to him who would stand for the rule of God over the people of God. But here—

Bezer at once shows how ample is the "store" of him who makes Christ his resource and treasure-house. Dependence on the living Lord, habitual reference to Him in all things, is the indispensable requisite for standing in the prophet's

turage, and Jahazah and her pasturage, Kedemoth and her pasturage, and Mephaath and her pasturage: four cities.

And out of the tribe of [k]Gad, Ramoth in Gilead and her pasturage, the city of refuge for the slayer, and Mahanaim and her pasturage, Heshbon and her pasturage, Jaazer and her pasturage: four cities in all.

All the cities for the children of Merari by their families, that remained of the families of the Levites, were [by] their lot twelve cities. All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the children of Israel were [l]forty-eight cities and their pasturage: these cities had every one of them their pasturage round about them; so it was with all these cities.

And Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he had [m]sworn to give unto their fathers; and they pos-

[k] ch. 13. 24, etc.

[l] Num. 35.7.

[m] Gen. 15.18.

place before men: and this is what, in his measure, every Merarite does. Then —

Jahazah, the same as Jahaz, where Israel met and defeated Sihon, with its meaning, "a place trodden down," reminds us of the resolute tread of the soldier of Christ, and of the well-contested fields in which he is to be found, as does —

Kedemoth, of "things that confront" him. But these are among his possessions, none the less, as things whereby faith is exercised and matured, which are "for" him, as to him that loves God all things are, — working together for good. Finally, here —

Mephaath, "shining forth," naturally speaks of the end which faith has before it, "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ," which is also connected with the appraisement of the responsibility of disciples, and the rewards of grace. These four cities are a fit contribution, then, from Reuben to Merari.

One tribe alone remains now to be considered, and that is Gad, whose four cities are already familiar to us, save the last: Ramoth in Gilead, a city of refuge for the manslayer; Mahanaim, where of old Jacob met the host of God; Heshbon, Sihon's capital; and Jazer, "He shall help."

Gad, as we have seen, speaks of spiritual increase, as well as of activity, not apart from conflict either. Ramoth in Gilead shows the place of acceptance in the Beloved, of power as raised up with Him, in whom alone all increase finds its secure starting-point, and all activity its safeguard as well as power. Taken out of the world, we are sanctified and sent into it again by the Lord our Head, as He was sent into it by the Father. How necessary the knowledge of this for the Merarite who has to do with the Church on earth! Then —

Mahanaim, "two hosts," which speaks certainly, from its history, of heavenly succor, with an implication of warfare, for which the battle-cry is that "the Lord of hosts is with us!" Thus we are not only sent forth, but accompanied and sustained.

Heshbon, then, reminds us how, as restored by *faith* (for the children of Reuben rebuilt the city, Num. xxxii. 37), "reason" has its place and use for spiritual increase (Gad), and for Merarite ministry. While —

Jazer — which may be a contraction for Jah-ezer, "Jah is help," — closes, then, the whole series with the tender reminder of our weakness, and of the divine strength to which it appeals, — which the frank recognition of it ever brings in for us.

Thus the enumeration of Israel's cities ends; and of what a wealth of blessing may they not put us in possession, if in faith and patience we seek to possess

sessed it and dwelt therein. And Jehovah gave them [n]rest round about, according to all that he had sworn unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them: Jehovah delivered all their enemies into their hand. There [o]failed not aught of any good thing that Jehovah had spoken unto the children of Israel; all came to pass.

[n] ch. 11. 23.

[o] ch. 23. 14. 1 Ki. 8. 56. *cf.* 1 Kings 10. 7.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxii.–xxiv.)

Eph. 3. 20, 21.

*Appended Warnings.*

(XXII.)

(xxii.) As to the unity of Israel.

1. THEN Joshua called the [p]Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh, and said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, and have hearkened to my voice in all that I commanded you: ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, and have kept the charge of the commandment of Jehovah your God. And now Jehovah your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he spake to them; and now return, and go unto your tents, into the land of your [q]possession which Moses the servant of Jehovah gave you, the other side of Jordan. Only take diligent heed to do the commandment and law which Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded you, in [r]loving Jehovah your God, and walking in all his ways, and keeping his commandments and cleaving unto him, even serving him with all your heart and with all your soul. And Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went unto their tents. (Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given [possession] in Bashan, but to the [s]other] half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on the other side of Jordan westward.) And also when Joshua sent them unto their tents and blessed them he spake unto them, saying, Return unto your tents with much [t]riches, and with very much cattle, with silver and with gold and with brass and with iron,

[p] ch. 1. 12. Num. 32. 28, etc.

[q] Num. 32. 32–42.

[r] Deut. 6. 5. Deut. 4. 9.

[s] ch. 17. 5.

[t] ch. 8. 2.

ourselves of it. This account of them, pitifully brief and incomplete as it is, is yet a witness of how much God has stored up here for the earnest-hearted. There has been shown, at least, the gleam of gold abundantly throughout; and little labor is required to make one possessor of it. Meditation and study are always needed, however, and here will be abundantly repaid. "The diligent soul shall be made fat."

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xxii.–xxiv.)

*Section* 1. (Chap. xxii.)

We have in the last subdivision of the book what is plainly supplementary. We have no longer the history of the work of divine power by which the inheritance of the people of God is secured to them, nor the account of the land itself, of which they take possession. Out of this we pass into what is manifestly of another and lower order of testimony,—not to the power of God or His grace and gift, but to the people themselves and to their little competency even to hold the gift which has been made their own.

In fact, we have already had, even in the history of their first establishment

and with very much raiment: [u]divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go into the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession, in which they had possession according to the voice of Jehovah by the hand of Moses. And when they came to the circuits of Jordan, which are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a [v]great altar to behold. And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the circuits of Jordan, opposite the children of Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, the [w]whole assembly of the children of Israel gathered themselves at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. And the children of Israel [x]sent unto the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and with him ten princes, of each father's house a prince for all the tribes of Israel; and each one was head of their father's house among the thousands of Israel.

And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh into the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, Thus saith all the assembly of Jehovah, What is this unfaithfulness that ye have committed against the God of Israel this day, in turning away from following Jehovah, building yourselves an altar to rebel this day against Jehovah? Is the [y]iniquity of Peor too little for

[u] Nu. 31. 27. 1 Sa. 30. 24.

[v] *cf.* Deut. 12. 13, 14.

[w] *cf.* Jud. 20. 1. Gal. 6. 1. 1 Cor. 12. 26.

[x] De. 13. 14.

[y] Num. 25. 3.

in their land, the record of failure. One of the things most strongly insisted on in the charge entrusted to them was that they should dispossess the Canaanites; and herein they fail conspicuously; not merely for lack of strength, but when they *have* strength. But even the lack of strength meant only lack of faith and of heart. Nor is this merely a negative, a defect: it means always the cherishing of what is contrary to God, and thus a positive seed of evil which springs up and spreads, as we shall find it spreading in the Book of Judges. Thus Israel are no sooner planted in the land than they fail in it; and such failure has been found in the history of all dispensations, and equally from the first. In the Christian Church, above all, as its privilege and blessing have been most remarkable, so have been the failure and evil in it: carefully foretold, moreover, as in Moses' song that of Israel. God is not disappointed—has not deceived Himself; nor, if we will listen to Him, will He allow us to be deceived. *Corruptio optimi, pessima corruptio* has been long said: "the corruption of what is best is the worst corruption." And let anything be entrusted to man, it will be corrupted. Thus, with the completion of revelation has gone on the growth of evil, Jezebel and Babylon of old being only types of worse abominations in Christian times, iniquity developing to the day of harvest, when, fully manifested for what it is, it shall be reaped for the fire that shall consume it.

us, from which we are not cleansed to this day, though there was a plague in the assembly of Jehovah, but that ye must turn away this day from following Jehovah? And it will be, because ye rebel to-day against Jehovah, to-morrow he will be wroth with the [z] whole assembly of Israel. But indeed, if the land of your possession be unclean, pass over to the land of Jehovah's possession, where Jehovah's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us; but rebel not against Jehovah, nor rebel against us, in building yourselves an altar beside the altar of Jehovah our God. Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit unfaithfulness about the devoted thing, and upon all the assembly of Israel there was wrath, and the man perished not alone in his iniquity?

z Num. ch. 7. 11. v. 20.

And the [a] children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered and spake unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, The God of gods, Jehovah, the God of gods, Jehovah, he knoweth, and Israel, he shall know, if in rebellion, and if in unfaithfulness against Jehovah, save us not this day! that we have built ourselves an altar to turn back from following Jehovah; and if to offer thereon [b] burnt-offering and meal-offering, and if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let Jehovah himself require it! and if we have not done it from fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your [c] children may speak to our children, saying, What have ye to do with Jehovah the God of Israel? Jehovah hath made Jordan a border between us and you: ye children of Reuben and children of Gad, ye have no portion in Jehovah. Even so may your children make our children cease from fearing Jehovah. [d] And we said, Let us now set to work to build an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we may perform the service of Jehovah before him, with our burnt-offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace-offerings, that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no

a Num. 5. 3.

b Deut. 12. 26, 27. ver. 29.

c Ex. 13. 14. ch. 4. 21.

d *ctr.* 1 Kl. 12. 27.

The last three chapters of Joshua are not, however, a formal prophecy of impending evil, such as, for instance, Moses' song. And the twenty-second chapter is not even a direct warning as to this, as Joshua's address is afterward. It is but the story of a well-meant attempt to provide against a possible breach, at an aftertime, of Israel's unity. The two and a half tribes, sent back to their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, set up near the river "a great altar to see to," as a witness that they are of one faith with those upon the other side, and that their children of after generations might not be deprived of a place with them in the worship of their common Lord. It is all well, and their brethren (even Phinehas with his unflinching zeal for God) are satisfied with their explanations. Yet it is plain an uneasy sense of insecurity is already haunting them. The danger may never practically present itself from the quarter they anticipate: we do not read that it ever did; yet the sense of danger may be a true presentiment none the less; and while the door is barred in one direction, it may be wide open in another.

portion in Jehovah. And we said, If it be that in time to come they say thus to us and to our generations, we will say, Behold the [e]pattern of the altar which our fathers made, not for burnt-offering nor for sacrifice, but as a witness between us and you. Far be it from us to rebel against Jehovah, and to turn back this day from following Jehovah, in building an altar for burnt-offering, for meal-offering, and for sacrifice, beside the altar of Jehovah our God that is before his tabernacle.

*e ctr.* 2 Kl. 16. 10-12.

And when Phinehas the priest and the princes of the assembly and the heads of the thousands of Israel that were with him heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spoke, it was good in their sight. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we know that Jehovah is among us, because ye have not committed this unfaithfulness against Jehovah: now have ye delivered the [f]children of Israel out of Jehovah's hand. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest and the princes returned from the children of Reuben and from the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, unto the children of Israel, and brought them word again. And the thing was good in the eyes of the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God, and no more spake of going up against them in battle, to destroy the land in which the children of Reuben and the children of Gad dwelt. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar [Ed], because it is a witness between us that Jehovah is God.

*f* ch. 7.11,12.

Joshua's testimony; and the response.

1. (xxii.) An appeal for integrity on the ground of Jehovah's faithfulness.

(XXIII., XXIV.)

2. [1]And it came to pass a long [g]time after Jehovah had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in days. And Joshua

*g* ch. 13. 1.

They are right in realizing that their one Lord is the bond of unity. They do not anticipate that their danger, in fact, is not from their brethren, but *in themselves*. Their own slipping away from Jehovah is that which leads to their dispersion and captivity in other lands, after allowing city after city to fall into the hands of Moab. The enemy that they are facing in the west comes up, thus, really from another quarter, and where there is no bulwark erected to keep him out. For us the lesson is all-important. It is not by ability to keep in view the whole horizon of circumstance that we shall be effectually guarded from the approach of evil: it is by that spirit which is manifested in those who are the true circumcision—"no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) This makes God a practical, continual necessity, and His all-sufficiency our complete safeguard and rest. This is the lesson with which the great altar of Ed impresses us, and a most useful one it surely is.

*Sec.* 2. (Chaps. xxiii., xxiv.)

The closing chapters are so plain that they require, in general, but little interpretation. Joshua's appeal, the renewal of the covenant, the limiting statement as to Israel's obedience in the days of Joshua and of those contemporary with

called for all Israel, for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them: I am old, I am advanced in days, and ye have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done unto all these nations for your sake: for Jehovah your God is he who fought for you. Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, for an inheritance unto your tribes from Jordan, as well as all the nations that I have cut off, unto the great sea toward the sunset. And Jehovah your God, he will expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess the land, as Jehovah your God hath said unto you. Be ye therefore very [h]resolute to observe and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or the left; that ye go not among these nations, these that remain among you, nor make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear [by them], nor serve them, nor bow yourselves to them; but cleave unto Jehovah your God, as ye have done unto this day. For Jehovah hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. [i]One man of you shall chase a thousand; for Jehovah your God is he who fighteth for you, as he hath said unto you. Take good heed therefore to your souls that ye love Jehovah your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, these that remain among you, and make marriages [j]with them, and go in unto them, and they unto you, know certainly that Jehovah your God will no more drive out

h ch. 1. 7, 8.

i Lev. 26. 8. Deut. 7. 3. 4.

j Limited, Mat. 1. 5.

him, all show the decline that is imminent, and which faces us at once in the following book. Joshua's words, "Ye cannot serve Jehovah," show that, with all his heroism of individual obedience, he is not deceived as to the issue under that covenant which so often needs renewing on the people's side. How could he be, with Moses' song ringing in his ears? Only those willing to be deceived could be. And so with ourselves exactly: predictions of the Church's course have so little ambiguity that it is marvelous that the smooth preaching of peace, and the comforting assurance of progressive blessing, could ever gain credence with those who boast in an "open Bible." But the Bible can be but little "open," as long as man's pride and self-seeking hang their imaginative veil before it; and the Church, believing herself heir to Israel's promises, has largely refused to accept the lessons of Israel's career, which she has so closely followed. Thank God, we are near the end of the strange history of near two millennia; and for us the end is the coming of the Lord.

(i.) These charges are a double warning, at the pathetic moment when Joshua, their leader in victory so often, is passing away. Old, and stricken with the weight of the years he carries, he stands before assembled Israel, to remind them of the Lord's fulfillment to them of His promises, and to assure them that His threatenings would be no less perfectly fulfilled. The word given to himself at the beginning of the conquest of the land, he now exhorts them with in turn: "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or

these [k]nations from before you, but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which Jehovah your God hath given you. And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your heart and in all your soul, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things of which Jehovah your God spake concerning you; all have come to pass unto you; not one thing hath failed thereof. And it shall be that as all good things are come upon you, which Jehovah your God hath spoken concerning you, so shall Jehovah bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which Jehovah your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow yourselves to them, then shall Jehovah's wrath be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land that he hath given you.

k Jud. 2. 3, 21.

2. (xxiv.) Jehovah or the heathen gods? The covenant confirmed.

[2] And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel unto [l]Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Your fathers dwelt of old on the other side of the River, Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, and led him throughout the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau; and I gave unto Esau mount [m]Seir, to possess it; and Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. And I sent Moses and Aaron, and plagued Egypt according to that which I did in the midst of it, and afterwards I brought you out. And I brought your fathers

l *cf.* Gen. 12. 6 Josh. 8. 33-35.

m Deut. 2. 5. *cf.* Amos. 9. 12. Obad. 19.

to the left." In truth it needs courage to stand for God and for His word in the face of all that this involves! Yet how strange to speak of any call for this as if it could be lacking! Courage, in standing for God! But such is man, even the best of men, that he needs to be urged to this, though only faith is lacking in this cause for one man to chase a thousand, yea, for two to put ten thousand to flight.

(ii.) Joshua's second address is at Shechem, a place memorable in so many ways from Abraham's time; and there the covenant with Jehovah is renewed. Joshua reminds them again of the mercies of God towards them, beginning with the call of Abraham himself, of whom we are now for the first told that he had been involved in the common idolatry of the times, along with his father Terah and his brother Nahor. With grace thus the tale begins, a grace their need of which their own history had so clearly testified. Divine power had been shown in the gift of Isaac, given when nature was dead in Abraham. Even Jacob and Esau were the seed of a barren woman. To Esau God had given Seir, while Israel endured the needed discipline in Egypt. Then came the marvel of their

out of Egypt, and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea. And they cried unto Jehovah, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and he brought the sea upon them, and it covered them: yea, your eyes have seen what I did in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness many days. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites who dwelt beyond Jordan; and they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess the land; and I destroyed them from before you. And Balak the son of Zippor arose and fought against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you; and I would not hearken unto Balaam, and he blessed you altogether; and I delivered you out of his hand. And ye crossed Jordan, and came unto Jericho; and the masters of Jericho fought against you, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Girgashite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: and I gave them into your hand. And I sent the [n] hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, [as] the two kings of the Amorites: not with thy sword nor with thy bow. And I gave into your hand a land for which ye labored not, and cities which ye builded not; and ye dwell therein; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not ye eat. Now therefore, fear Jehovah, and serve him in integrity and truth: and put away the [o] gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. But if it be evil in your eyes to serve Jehovah, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods that your fathers who were beyond the River served, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye are dwelling; but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

n Ex. 23. 28.

o Gen. 35. 2.

And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; for Jehovah our God is he who brought us up and our fathers, from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way in which we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed; and Jehovah drave out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who dwelt in the land:

deliverance, the days of sojourn in the wilderness, the dispossession of the Amorite kings, and the spiritual conflict when Balaam, after all the history of failure, sought how to curse and ended but in blessing them; finally, the possession of the land they now enjoyed. After all this, Joshua bids them, if there could be doubt, to make up their minds whom they would serve, the idols their fathers had served beyond the river, the gods of the Canaanites in whose land they dwelt, or else Jehovah: his own choice for himself and his house was already made.

In result the people renew the covenant, and a great stone is set up under an oak in memorial of it. It is still the legal covenant, and all is suspended

therefore we will serve Jehovah, for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah: for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God: he will not forgive your [p] transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve Jehovah. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you Jehovah, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore [said he] put away the strange gods that are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and to his voice will we hearken. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua [q] wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that is by the sanctuary of Jehovah. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of Jehovah that he spake unto us: and it shall be a witness among you, lest ye deny your God. And Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

And it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, that is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

And Israel served Jehovah all the days of [r] Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and who knew all the works of Jehovah that he had done for Israel. And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought out of Egypt buried they in Shechem, in the piece of ground that Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitahs*: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. And Eleazar the son of Aaron died, and they buried him in the hill of Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

p Ex. 23. 21.

q Deut. 31. 22. 24.

r Acts 20. 29.

*A kesitah is supposed to be about four shekels.

upon an obedience at the best how fitful! The stone in its lifelessness would abide, more certainly far than the living tree under which it was set up, Israel's picture at that moment. For the present it is well, and they depart, every one in peace to his inheritance.

Joshua dies, his influence lasting till the end of his generation—a significant limitation. Joseph his father's bones are buried at Shechem. Lastly, Eleazar dies: and these three graves are a sign that the Great Deliverer has not yet come. The types are but the shadow, not the substance: which yet for faith they point on towards. Thank God, for us the Deliverer is come, although not even yet the full deliverance.

# APPENDIX.

## THE TYPICAL INTERPRETATION, ESPECIALLY OF THE CITIES, BOUNDARIES, AND TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

For those who have carefully examined what has been before us, it can hardly be needful to insist further on the truth and necessity of the typical interpretation. To some extent, indeed, all who accept Scripture as inspired of God must, of course, accept this. The "holy places made with hands" are thus expressly declared to be "the figures of the true" (Heb. ix. 24); certain events in Israel's history are declared to have "happened to them for types" (1 Cor. x. 11, *marg.*); the law in general is said to have a "shadow of good things to come" (Heb. x. 1); and, in a similar way speak many well-known scriptures. Moreover, of some things plainly declared to be types, we have no inspired interpretation, as in the case of the passage of the sea, just as some of the New Testament parables are left for spiritual wisdom to interpret by the help of the context, and of truth found elsewhere.

In the application of Melchizedek's history (Heb. vii.) we find how minutely significant these histories may be. Names are translated, the very order of their occurrence insisted on, meaning is given to the omissions as well as the positive statements, in complete accordance with the idea of verbal inspiration, and the prophetic significance running through the whole. And on this verisimilitude between the Old Testament history and a pervasive typical meaning to be recognized in it, the apostle grounds his appeal even to foolish Galatians, who, if they desired to be under the law, should hear the law speaking to them in this way (Gal. iv. 21, seq.) The historical books, from Joshua to Kings at least, were thus by the Jews entitled "the former prophets."

The sketch of the Pentateuch already given is an absolute demonstration that the types contained in these books are not scattered at random through them, but arranged in an orderly manner, the books at large, and every section of them, illustrating this. They are the pictures of spiritual realities, needing and finding their explanation elsewhere; in general, in the New Testament: *as* pictures, speaking for themselves to the spiritual mind,—of course when the light is thrown upon them. They then become illuminated with a strange glory, are lifted from simple history into prophecy, while they confirm, in this way, the history itself, as written with the pen of divine inspiration. The Old Testament witnesses thus to the New; and the New also to the Old: what otherwise might seem trivial becomes invested with a new dignity; the past reveals the future, and admonishes and encourages the present.

To all this, moreover, the numerical structure adds its confirmation in every part, testing it by the imposition of conditions to which nothing but the truth could submit itself with success. And in Joshua, at least, we have found these symbolic numbers governing even catalogues of names and sections of a boundary line. The wonder of all which will be no doubt against it in the minds of many, producing a vague suspicion, at least, on the part of those even who are prepared, perhaps, to admit a certain truth in such spiritual mathematics within what they would deem safe bounds. Let us see, then, if the limits *are* safe: it is quite possible to test the matter in so rigid a way as to satisfy the most skeptical—where skepticism is not of the heart: for which no proof of this kind can be expected to avail.

I have elsewhere* brought forward nine names from among Judah's cities

* "From Amam to Bziothiah: A Record of the Soul's Progress, and a Witness to the Word."

as an argument in this way. For simplicity, both in the names and numbers, I can find no better now; but we can test them more exhaustively: let us do this.

The names are found, Josh. xv. 26-28; as cities of Judah, they should give material for "praise" on the part of the people of God. They are among the cities of the South which speak of the power of God in behalf of His own: as a *third* group of these, they give us the work of the Spirit in them. The names are nine in number; and nine seems always to be a 3 x 3: we have three stages, then, of this work, and three names on each stage. The first stage of the Spirit's work in us is undoubtedly that of new birth: the first three names are—

1. *Amam*, "mother," or "their mother,"—referring to our origin from Eve: "how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Here is the *need* of new birth.

2. *Shema*, "report"; for "faith cometh by a report, and the report by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17, *Gk.*). And thus—

3. *Moladah*, "birth." For "we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Here the truth is simple, and the numerals exact. One is the number of *primacy*, so of paternity, beginning, origin; two is the number of testimony; three, of resurrection and of the Spirit. As to the meanings of the words, only the first can be for a moment questioned; "mother" is, however, strictly legitimate from the Hebrew, and, indeed, the only rendering that it would seem to countenance, and is mostly accepted.

The second stage is that of which the seventh of Romans speaks,—"deliverance from the law." And here we have—

1. *Hazar-gadda*, "inclosure of conflict," the dominion of law in the conscience shutting us up to this; next, the way of deliverance—

2. *Heshmon*, "quiet reckoning,"—faith, not effort, not fighting; and thus we find—

3. *Beth-pelet*, the "house of escape."

The doctrine it is not here the place to dwell on. The numbers emphasize, 1, the *dominion* of law; 2, *deliverance;* 3, the *dwelling-place*, the heart's home, which is in Christ, where Christ is,—in each case what is of main importance. As to the names, only Heshmon could there be any doubt of. I take it as a compound word from *hashah*, to be still, and *manah*, to "measure," or "reckon," in its participial form.

The third stage is that of "realized sanctification," or of being "in the Spirit," where we have—

1. As implied in the dominion of the Spirit, *Hazar-shual*, the "jackal-pen," the fettering of the flesh, though still in us; as it is said, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

2. *Beersheba*, the "well of the oath," naturally speaks of assurance as connected with the living water, the Spirit of God as "witness" for Christ in the soul; while—

3. *Biziothiah*, "among Jah's olives," reminds us of the *indwelling* of the Spirit in the Christian; for the olive is that in which the oil resides. Here the names of this section end. There can be no question as to the meaning, and that of the numerals is simple and clear.

Now let any one try but to put these words in a different order, what would be the result? Confusion at once, and in every way; nor could any power of imagination avail to rescue from this. Leave out but one of them, you will find there is a manifest gap in the meaning. Nay, I will go further, and say that, of all the many names upon these lists, I doubt whether there could be *any* substituted for any here, that would convey the meaning that these do: so little is there of chance or of guesswork about it. Every number has its place necessarily in connection with the name attached. Every name must fill its place in its

section; every section must similarly fill its place in connection with the series as a whole; this, again, finds its place as a third group among the cities of the South; these cities of the South have their meaning as the first division of the cities of Judah: and so we might go on. If this be chance, I confess I do not see why letters thrown out at random should not form themselves into words and intelligible sentences. If it be imagination, I cannot understand why it should be able to move so readily in certain ways, and not at all in others. Why should the imagination be so easily able to make "Amam, Shema, Moladah," speak intelligibly, but not Moladah, Amam, Shema; nor yet Shema, Amam, Moladah; nor Moladah, Shema, Amam; nor Shema, Moladah, Amam; nor Amam, Moladah, Shema? Of the nine names together there are 362,880 possible combinations, and just so many chances to one against their being found in this precise order.

And how is it that, burdened with so many conditions as we have found, imagination should be able to marshal hundreds of names in constant obedience to its desires, and transform a barren catalogue into images of exquisite beauty, bathed in heaven's own sunlight, and musical with anthems of devout worshipers?

But this is allegory; and it is decided by many, even in the face of Scripture itself, that allegorizing is but fancy, pure and simple,—specious and alluring, but dangerous, and to be shunned! It is certain that Paul says of parts of Abraham's history, "which things are an allegory." It is certain that one book of Scripture is either "allegory" or a love-song. On the other hand, it is most certain that there has been a profanation of allegory on the part of many, from Origen to the present time, which has roused many against all allegorical interpretation. They "concluded," says Calvin, "that the literal sense was too mean and poor, and that under the outward bark of the letter there lurked deeper mysteries, which cannot be extracted but by beating out allegories. God visited this profanation by a just judgment, when He suffered the pure meaning of Scripture to be buried under false interpretations. I acknowledge that Scripture is a most rich and inexhaustible fountain of all wisdom; but I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which any man at his pleasure may assign. Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely."

To which Schaff adds: "This style of interpretation is not *exposition*, but *imposition:* the meaning is not read *out*, but read *in*. History, the grammar, and the dictionary, are the proper aids in Bible study; not the subjective imagination." *

Yet he has to admit that "the apostle Paul himself gives instances of the sacred allegory, although his use of it is so exceptional and so restrained that it does not countenance it as a *method!*"

Is this true, that it is so exceptional and restrained?—or that any fair examination of Scripture will show that it does not countenance the method? If by that is meant, indeed, the setting aside of the literal sense, "the natural and obvious meaning," then, of course, it does not countenance this; but Paul's allegorizing did not either. If there is meant by it simply that there are often deeper meanings than the natural and obvious one, every type in the Old Testament stands really as proof. And going back of the legal system to the book of Genesis, we shall find, from the beginning, God both in speech and act choosing to convey truth to us after this manner. What else does the ordinance of the Sabbath show in the light of the "sabbatism that remains for the people of God"? (Heb. iv. 9.) What, the first paradise, in view of the "tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God"? (Rev. ii. 7.) Adam is thus, as head of his race, a type of Christ the last Adam (Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 45); and the consequences, on either side, are compared by the apostle. So his relation to Eve

* Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia: *s. v.* "Allegorical Interpretation of the Bible."

represents, we are told, that of Christ to the Church (Eph. v. 32). In the history of the fall, the serpent and his doom are not to be taken in the simple letter; nor is the bruised heel of the woman's seed; Abel's sacrifice, in being typical, is simply allegorical. Going on to the flood, the salvation of Noah and his house are declared by Peter to be typical (1 Pet. iii. 21); the rainbow is an allegorical "sign" of the covenant with the new earth. Abraham's history has connected with it the elaborate and minute allegory of Melchizedek; the covenant as to his seed is sealed by an allegorical vision (ch. xv.); Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, are all allegorical; circumcision is a sign; Isaac, after his offering is received back "in a figure" from the dead (Heb. xi. 19). Bethel speaks allegorically, by its ladder, to Jacob; as does the wrestling with the angel upon his return to Canaan. The names of Judah, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, and Gad, are all allegorized in their father's prophecy. The dreams of the butler and baker, and of Pharaoh afterwards, are all pure allegory.

Yet allegorizing is not countenanced as a method! On the other hand, we may surely assert that to those who go so far it will not be possible to stop at this point. The limits are evidently not marked off: a Joseph separated from his brethren, exalted among the Gentiles, afterward receiving in the time of their necessity his brethren again,—a Benjamin, son of his mother's sorrow, but of his father's right hand,—compel us to go further; while the further we go the wider the field becomes. It is not those who have trodden this path who will be led to believe that it is not a practicable or a safe one.

The extension of the method is, at the same time, its safeguard. Partial views have been the hindrance, or a main one, to consistency; and the knowledge of the distinctive features of the book, with their divisions and numerical structure gives a unity of apprehension most favorable to clear vision. Every specific type finds its place in relation to the whole; and there are checks and counterchecks of all sorts to mere unbridled fancy. We have seen, as to the names of Israel's cities, how well they guard their meaning, and how impossible it seems to read what thoughts we please *into* them. They speak very definitely, in general; even as to the meanings of the words leaving very little margin for difference of understanding. The most part are beyond controversy, and every name ascertained preserves the same meaning in any after-recurrence, which in these lists is not at all infrequent. The cities given to Levi, at the close of all this part, are a rearrangement, almost entirely, of what is already familiar to us; and where, therefore, there is absolutely no room for any change of meaning anywhere: a most rigid and perfect test of accuracy, which they most perfectly endure.

It is earnestly hoped that the interpretation of all this part will receive the patient study which it demands, and which it will again so well repay. Only in this way can it be expected that any well-grounded conviction of its truth will be attained; which, when realized, will not only yield abundant instruction to him who seeks it, but also will confirm and deepen in him the apprehension of the perfect—minute—inspiration of Scripture, and make him better able to draw from the divine fullness which it everywhere contains. It had been intended, in further proof, to append here a brief review of the truths which the cities and boundaries of the tribes of Israel present to us, and the relation in which they are found to one another; but to do this aright would occupy almost as much space as has been already given to them. This must be left, therefore, to the student of the Word to follow out for himself, with the clue afforded,—a task which will be found one of peculiar interest: for it is in this connection and relation of divine truths to each other that these types find so much the power for instruction and blessing for the soul. May we have the diligent heart only that shall be made rich!

# SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF JUDGES.

JUDGES gives us the history of the people now brought into the land, but under the legal covenant which they have assumed to themselves—a covenant under which no man may stand. Joshua's day past, a breach with God is soon apparent, the effects of which show themselves more and more. The nation disintegrates. The tribes fall asunder, or are only one in bondage to a common enemy; and though God raises up judges and is with the judges for the work of deliverance, even these fail increasingly and their work becomes correspondingly partial and ineffective, Samson at the close even leaving them in captivity, which lasts to Samuel's day.

For us the typical application is but too plain. If Joshua has shown us the portion and blessing of a heavenly people, Judges gives us without any doubt the history of that people. The Church visible is here seen in its decline and corruption, its broken condition and captivity for its sins to different forms of error and evil, along with God's way of deliverance from these exemplified in many partial deliverances. The coming of the Lord, the only complete and final deliverance, could not, of course, be pictured here.

The divisions of the book are three only: —

Div. 1. (Chap. i.–iii. 4.) The Rebellion of the Chosen People.
Div. 2. (Chap. iii. 5–xvi.) Bondage and Deliverances.
Div. 3. (Chap. xvii.–xxi.) The Corruption at Heart manifest.

# JUDGES.

## DIVISION 1. Chap. i.–iii. 4.)

*The Rebellion of the Chosen People.*

### SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. i.–ii. 5.)

*Mingling with the Nations to be Dispossessed.*

Judah: the sovereignty of God, and His sufficiency for faith.

1. (1–8.) God sovereign.

(I. 1-20.)

1. [1] NOW it came to pass after the [a] death of Joshua that the children of Israel asked Jehovah, saying, [b] Who shall go up first for us unto the Canaanite, to fight against him? And Jehovah said, [c] Judah shall go up: behold, I have given the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, [d] Come up with me into my lot, and let us fight against the Canaan-

[a] Josh. 24. 29. Josh. 1. 1. Gen. 50. 24. *ctr.* Rom. 6. 9.

[b] *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 7, 8 1Chr.14.10. Acts13.1-3. Prov.3.5,6. *ctr.* ch. 20. 18, 23, 28. 1 Ki. 22. 5-28.

[c] Nu. 2. 9. Nu. 10. 14. *cf.*2 Chr.20. 21.

[d] *cf.*Is.11.14. Eccl. 4. 9-12.

## NOTES.

### DIV. 1.

THE first division of the book, as introductory to the history of captivity and deliverances which fills the body of it, has evidently two parts. Israel had been warned that, if they mingled themselves with the nations, they would be led to serve their gods. The fulfillment of this is what is now shown: in the first part the mingling, in the second the open breach with the Lord and fall into idolatry. The truth of God abides amid the untruth of the people. He is justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged.

### SUBD. 1.

1. There are here five sections, in which the grading of the lessons is evident, and the commencing decline apparent even from the first. Judah, the leader in the wilderness, the leader, too, in the settlement of the land, the lion-tribe of Jacob's prophecy, comes before us as the leader now, and that by divine appointment; and yet to illustrate this. At the same time, the sovereignty and sufficiency of God are illustrated also in the most striking way, that we may see there is no failure upon His part. With the people it begins, indeed, at the highest,—not, as we might suppose, with the lowest: and this is noteworthy,—a thing of which we have many examples in Scripture; for high and low are alike dependent upon divine grace, and in the littleness of humanity not far removed from one another.

(i.) Israel are at first one; and in that subjection to God, which is true unity: "Who shall go up for *us* against the Canaanites first," they ask, "to fight against them?" And the Lord not only names the champion, but assures success: "Judah shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand." We have before seen what is the reason, spiritually, of Judah being thus in the front; and that the spirit of "praise" is the spirit of power. Necessarily: for it puts God first, and implies devotedness to Him,—a joy in obedience which gives courage and enthusiasm. The cause is God's, and it must prosper. If Judah be weak, Israel as a whole must languish.

But Judah *is*, in fact, weak already. The land is pledged to him by God, and to him alone. The word is precise, and none may add to it any more than diminish from it: to add to it is really to diminish from it. Yet Judah turns to Simeon, his brother, for help, as if the promise of God were not enough. "Come with me," he says, "into my lot, and let us fight against the Canaanites; and I will go with thee into thy lot."

ite, and I also will go with thee into thy lot; and [e]Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and [f]Jehovah gave the Canaanite and the Perizzite into their hand: and they smote them in [g]Bezek, ten thousand men. And they found Adonibezek in Bezek, and fought against him, and smote the Canaanite and the Perizzite. And Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Seventy kings, with their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gleaned under my table; [h]as I have done, God has requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there. And the children of Judah fought against [i]Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.

2. (9–15.) The activities of faith.

[2] And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the [j]Canaanite dwelling in the hill-country, and in the south, and in the low country. And Judah went against the Canaanite that dwelt in [k]Hebron, (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba,) and they smote Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.

*e ctr.* Gen. 49. 5. *cf.* Josh. 19. 9.

*f* ver. 19, 22

*g cf.* 1 Sam. 11. 8.

*h cf.* Lev. 24. 20. Esth. 7. 10. Esth. 9. 1-10. Rev. 18. 6. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 3. 9.

*i cf.* Josh. 15. 63. ver. 21. 1 Chr. 11. 4-7.

*j* Josh. 11. 21. Luke 1. 39.

*k* Josh. 15. 13, 14. *cf* Gen. 13. 18, etc. Nu. 13. 22.

A little thing this will seem even to most, in a day when men supplement God's word after their own pleasure. But is it not, in fact, unbelief in God's truth or power, that is at work in it? Simeon, Judah's brother in a special way, may be for him the most suited of all companions, and God even has linked their inheritance, in a special way, together: but all this is no argument, if God's word is to be followed, and be the perfect word that indeed it is. Simeon, "hearing," stands, as we have seen, for communion, which all right "hearing" surely is; and communion, can it not aid worship against the Canaanites,—in the spiritual warfare to which God's Israel is called? Yes, in its place, but not out of it; wherever the word of God is given its place also, for what communion can there be apart from this? And do we not need the reminder that communion and the authority of the Word must go together, and that what purports to be communion can never really be made to eke out a worship which has lost the simplicity of obedience which certifies it to be truly that. We shall find, accordingly, in due time, the loss of power which is the result.

Such things are not, however, always at once discovered. Judah and Simeon go together, and the Canaanites and Perizzites are delivered into their hand: they smite in Bezek a host ten thousand strong. In Bezek they find, also, Adonibezek, whom they pursue and maim, inflicting the judgment of God upon him for cruelties of this kind inflicted upon others. He himself owns it as this,—a remarkable witness to Israel of how and why God was against the Canaanites; and that He whose judgments they were executing was over all. His name goes with the lesson: Bezek* means "fettered," and so were these hosts that they destroyed; Adonibezek, "lord of Bezek," it being doubtless his chief city, but thus also and literally, "a lord in fetters." So it is with the freest, when in opposition to God, and with the mightiest, in His hand.

He is brought to Jerusalem, only to die there; and the city itself is smitten with the sword and burnt; for the "foundation of peace" must be righteousness, and the Jebusite city is only an hypocrisy, though few may believe this now.

(ii.) Judah proceeds to other victories; and here we have the repetition of a story familiar to us, mostly in the words in which it has been given us before.

* *Bezeq*, literally "in a fetter."

And from thence he went against the inhabitants of [l]Debir; now the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher. And [m]Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass, when she came, that she urged him to ask of her father the field. And she sprang down from the ass; and Caleb said unto her, [n]What wouldst thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing; for a land of the [o]south hast thou given me: give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

3. (16.) The Kenite nest in Judah.

[3]And the children of the [p]Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the [q]city of palms with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah which is in

[l] Josh. 15. 7, 15.

[m] Josh. 15. 16–19.

[n] *cf.* Esth. 7. 2. Jno. 14. 13. Mat. 13. 12.

[o] *cf.* Psalm 126. 4. Ps. 63. 1.

[p] ch. 4. 11. 1 Sa. 15. 6. 1 Sa. 30. 29.

[q] Deut. 34. 3. ch. 3. 13. 2 Chr. 28. 15.

The taking of Hebron and the destruction of the Anakim, which had been before ascribed to Caleb, are here ascribed to Judah, the tribe to which Caleb belongs; but Caleb himself appears in the next incident, in which Othniel and Achsah also are found as before. Scripture is not afraid of a repetition which emphasizes God's delight in the achievements of His people, among which Achsah's request for the water-springs figures alongside of Othniel's capture of Debir. How little should we, perhaps, think of putting these things together! And, indeed, the spiritual interpretation must be found in order rightly to understand it. Then Othniel, the "lion of God," is the type of the heroism of faith, which, like the son of Kenaz, finds strength in Another, and its helpmeet in that simplicity which claims and receives the fullness of the Spirit for making good its portion in the land. These two must come together in the Canaan-dweller even now; and where they are found, a "book of remembrance" will not be wanting. And still the rule is, "Conquer, and work the land"; but it must be said to-day, there are few Othniels, fewer Achsahs, fewest of all those in whom the two are united. The Lord increase their race!

Thus, as we have had in the first part of this section the sovereignty and sufficiency of God for His people, we have in the second part the relationships of faith in those who apprehend it. And let us remember that Caleb, Othniel, Achsah, are Judeans—worshipers. Worship has to do intimately with the things here spoken of, which test and manifest it. With Caleb, the "whole-hearted," this is easily seen; but we have found, also, before, how Judah shines in the battlefield, and the quiet activity which Achsah implies — Achsah, or "anklet," she of the decorated *foot?* — is not less really intelligible. Altogether we have, on the whole, a bright picture to begin Judges with. Even in the next section, however, the clouds are gathering.

(iii.) We find here notice of the Kenite settling among the children of Judah in the South. They are the Midianite tribe out of which Moses' wife had come, thus descendants of Abraham by Keturah, linked in this double way with Israel, and who, upon Moses' invitation, had accompanied them into the land. But they never unite themselves with the people of God, though settling among them, and are viewed in Balaam's prophecy as separate to the last. The play upon the name there—"thou puttest thy nest (*ken*) in the rock"—shows, evidently, the meaning of it. They are Midianites, men of the world, but not at strife with Israel, as others of their race. Nay, they make a nest for themselves among them, and it is for the nest they are there. They come now and dwell on the southern border of Judah in the wilderness, their natural home, south of Arad, the place of the "wild ass." They keep their wilderness manners in the land,—are not at home there, though they may like the security it affords.

the south of Arad; and they came and dwelt with the people.

4. (17.) The world exposed.

4 And Judah went with Simeon his brother; and they smote the Canaanite dwelling at Zephath, and executed the ban upon it; and the name of the city was called Hormah.

5. (18-20.) Measure for measure.

5 And Judah took [r] Gaza and her territory, and [s] Ashkelon and her territory, and [t] Ekron and her territory. And Jehovah was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill-country, but [u] could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had [v] chariots of iron. And they gave Hebron to [w] Caleb, as Moses had said, and he drove out from thence the three sons of Anak.

(I. 21.)

The Benjamite with the Jebusite.

2. And the [x] Jebusite dwelling in Jerusalem the children of Benjamin did not drive out; but the Jebusite dwelleth [y] with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

r ch. 16. 1.
s Zeph. 2. 4.
t 1 Sam. 5. 10.
u *ctr.* Josh. 1. 5. Phil. 4. 13.
v. Josh. 17. 16-18. *cf.* ch. 4. 3. Deut. 20. 1.
w Josh. 14. 6-14.
x *cf.* ver. 8.
y Deut. 20. 16, 17.

All this describes but too well the condition of many who attach themselves, in every dispensation, to the people of God, yet are not of them. The victories of the children of Judah invite them and make way for them; but their presence is no strength, and no sign for good.

(iv.) Next we find Judah with Simeon in his lot. Hormah here had been so named before, being in the territory of Arad when the children of Israel overthrew its king and executed the ban upon his cities (Num. xxi. 3). There we looked at it as the representation of the power of the world in Satan's hand to hinder the progress of the people of God. In the time that had elapsed it had revived again,—how easily the world recovers power!—and now is called Zephath, "overlaying." This is what the world is, indeed,—an overlaying, bright and glittering enough, of what is devoted to destruction, a crust over the curse. It is the part of Simeon (communion) to take off the false show and reveal the evil,—to make Zephath Hormah, as it really is.

(v.) Judah goes on to conquest; and now three of the Philistine cities fall,—Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron. Jehovah is with him: but then, most strangely as it would seem, we hear of a limit to the power which he displays. "Jehovah was with Judah, and he obtained possession of the mountains, but the inhabitants of the valley were not to be driven out, because they had chariots of iron"! What a collocation that seems! Omnipotence was stopped, as it would seem, by chariots of iron; and so often it does seem,—nay, in a sense, even it is true; for the removal of difficulties is often conditioned upon the simplicity of a faith which (alas!) is so little simple. Had not God said that He had delivered the land into Judah's hand? Yes; and Judah had turned round to Simeon, his brother, for help, as if no promise had been given. Judah has *measured* the might of Jehovah; and *Jehovah measures* the strength put forth for him. Thus the divine ways are equal; and Judah loses the fullness of a blessing he cannot grasp. May we give heed to this!

On the other hand, it is in contrast, yet in conformity with this, that we are here reminded of Caleb's complete success against the terrible sons of Anak. Faith shall not suffer defeat, be men at large—be the people of God, even—unbelieving as they may.

(2.) Benjamin now follows Judah and Simeon, but has only one verse devoted to him here. And in it we find him—little as Judah may show us the ideal of faith—in contrast even with Judah. This is marked: for Judah has already taken Jerusalem and burned it with fire, as we have seen; while Benjamin, without an effort that we read of, permits the Jebusites to dwell there with

Luz transformed to Bethel, but revived elsewhere.

(I. 22-26.)

3. And the house of [z]Joseph, they also went up to Bethel, and Jehovah was with them. And the house of Joseph sent to [a]espy Bethel; and the name of the city before was Luz. And the guards saw a man coming forth out of the city; and they said unto him, Show us now the entrance of the city, and we will [b]show thee mercy. And he showed them the entrance to the city; and they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but the man and all his family they let go. And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a [c]city, and called the name of it Luz: that is its name unto this day.

z Josh. 16. 1, etc.
a Deut. 1. 22. Josh. 2. 1.
b 1 Sa. 30. 15.
c *cf.* Gal. 5, 9.

themselves.* This, too, while Benjamin was the warrior tribe, as is plain in all the notices of it. The failure is thus mere indifference; and the breach of the Lord's express command is as plain as can be.

No need for many words about it: yet how important that it should be here —that we should see the true condition of things as we open the book. That this failure is in *Benjamin* also, when we realize the spiritual significance of Benjamin as Joshua has declared it to us, deepens the meaning. Benjamin is the apprehension of Christ, as having our place in Him—being identified with Him; the knowledge of the new man, as expressed in Colossians, "where there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." Benjamin in alliance with Canaanites is the utter contradiction and opposite of all this. The forgetfulness of our place in Christ is the core of all unfaithfulness to God, of refusal of His judgment upon the world, of toleration of what is evil in His sight, of false associations and inconsistency of walk. Thus the relation of this to the long tale of evil that follows in the book is unmistakably plain.

(3.) The third section seems to continue this assurance of Benjamin's weakness. Bethel belongs to Benjamin, as we know; yet it is the house of Joseph that takes it out of the enemy's hand. Lying upon Ephraim's border, there is, of course, a reason for this: but the spiritual reason always underlies the natural. Bethel, we are reminded, was, in Canaanitish hands, Luz; and the capture of the city was, of course, its transformation. "Separation," which Luz means, has many Canaanite forms. The selfishness of the natural heart makes necessarily for disintegration in the world; and while it may seek alliance for its own ends, this is in itself but a form of division. This is only the effect of being away from God: one must then, because without faith in Him, toil in self-service. But because the world is away from God, "separation" *is* necessary; "be not unequally yoked together" results from "touch not the unclean thing." The line must be indeed drawn, but so drawn that God shall be owned and honored, and then Luz becomes Bethel, as we have elsewhere seen, the relationship of God's house is capable of being realized (2 Cor. vi. 14-18). It is simple enough how Joseph may help Benjamin in this—Joseph, not simply Ephraim: Manasseh's earnest pressing on is needed to give the full Joseph-character. Seeking to win Christ, all alien things drop off; and in that path we shall find none but those who seek Him. Bethel with all its blessedness is thus surely attained.

But there is another lesson in this place also. One Canaanite is spared out of the city; and there is no similarity here to Rahab's case, no faith resembling hers. He does not take his place henceforth with Israel, but goes away into the land of the Hittites, and among these "sons of terror" a new Luz springs up. The tree, though cut down to the root, may revive from the root; and the old

* Jerusalem lay on the border, between these two tribes, the main part of the city, with the citadel, lying in Benjamin. It may have been only what lay within their boundary that Judah burned. The citadel was strong, as we see, in David's time.

(I. 27-36.)

1. Manasseh: failure in concentered energy.

4. [1]And [d]Manasseh did not take possession of Bethshean and her dependencies, nor Taanach and her dependencies, nor [drive out] the inhabitants of Dor and her dependencies, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her dependencies, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and

*d cf.* Nu. 1. 34, 35 with Nu. 26. 34.

error, left as no longer formidable, may even go afar to sojourn, yet survive and have to be met once more. Indeed, with how many of these Canaanitish cities do we find it so!

(4.) What follows is a dismal story of failure. In part a repetition from the book of Joshua, it brings together the items of God's bill of account against the people, as divided among the tribes, six of which are here named. It does not follow that the rest were guiltless, however; indeed, Benjamin has been already spoken of; nor does it follow that all the failure even of the tribes mentioned is reported here. That Tyre is not among the cities named as remaining in the hands of the Canaanites, seems a proof against this, hardly to be doubted; Endor is found also in Joshua (xvii. 11), and not here. Those enumerated are given as representative, and with a higher meaning running through all: and this we think can be established, although some of the names are difficult to interpret.

(i.) Manasseh heads the tribes on this accusing list; significantly enough if we remember that Manasseh stands for progress, the forgetting what is behind and pressing on. Yet he has a record of five cities left to the Canaanite with depending villages, and that when he had the power also to drive them out. How could the loss of energy be more plainly shown?

The names are, of course, significant: first, Bethshean, "the house of quiet," which as connected with Manasseh and with Issachar (Josh. xvii. 11), would speak of that practical rest of heart which a right walk furnishes to the one who presses on. There is nothing to draw such an one back from the pursuit of what is before him: no entanglement with the world around, no alarm of conscience, or need of self-occupation. The loss of Bethshean is thus a most serious one; and yet how may, in fact, a failed Manasseh consent to such a loss, bribed by some dishonorable bargain with the Canaanite!

In the second place we have Taanach, "sandy soil," whose import may be seen in its connection with Gath-rimmon among the Levitical cities (Josh. xxi. 25). Taanach's lesson, as that of the wilderness, is the weaning from other dependency than upon God alone—a thing again of first importance for a Manassite. But Taanach must be retained or Bethshean cannot be: dependence and rest are linked inseparably together.

We have next Dor, the most obvious meaning of which is "generation." In its application it may naturally speak of that limiting of human life which it implies: "One generation goeth and another cometh." The word means in its first significance a "circle," and a collection of tents in a Bedouin encampment (generally circular) is called a *dowar;* from which Parkhurst supposes the application to contemporaries. Coming as it does, after a memorial of the wilderness, in which under the ban of God a whole Israelitish generation perished, it cannot but impress one the more, as intended to convey such meaning. And the brevity of human life may well impress deeply a Manassite: "So teach us to number our days," says the Psalmist, "that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." The loss of Dor implies the slipping back into the world's error, gross as it is, of ignoring what none can deny, and this is followed naturally by the loss of—

Ibleam, "it consumes the people," which in the fourth place and in connection with the last word, one cannot be at a loss to interpret. Sin is indeed the devourer of the people, mightier than the Balaam whose name here it bears, and alas, prevailing how much, against the people of God themselves. Can a child of Manasseh forget this also? Surely even too much. None of these cities were *wholly* gone from them, but a rabble of Canaanites had practical possession.

Megiddo is the last of these names, meaning, I believe, "the manifestation of

her dependencies; but the Canaanites [e] would dwell in that land. And it was so that, when Israel was strong, they made the Canaanites [f] tributary, and did not utterly drive them out.

2. Ephraim: failure in increase.

[2] And [g] Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer, but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

3. Zebulon: failure in consecration.

[3] [h] Zebulon did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanite dwelt among them, and became tributary.

[e] Josh. 17.11–13.

[f] Josh. 16.10. 1 Ki. 9. 21. *cf.* Gal. 5.17.

[g] *cf.* Num. 1. 32. 33 with Nu. 26. 37. Josh. 17.14–18.

[h] *cf.* Nu. 1. 30. 31 with Nu. 26, 27.

it": and this, under the number that speaks of responsibility and recompense, carries us on, of necessity, to the day of account and manifestation. The realization of this must be lost, if the things of which the last names remind us have been. Megiddo must go with Dor and Ibleam. Plainly these names, the whole of them, are a series in close relation with one another: a meaning runs through them which must have guided in some way the hand of the writer. Was the wisdom in himself, or beyond himself then? Can these simple histories be, after all, prophetic? The Jews in fact speak of them as "the former prophets;" and we have proof that in them "holy men that were of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

(ii.) Ephraim's failure naturally follows Manasseh's, inasmuch as in the order of attainment, as we have seen long since (Gen. xlviii. *n*), Ephraim is dependent on Manasseh. Gad on the other side of Jordan stands in similar dependence upon Reuben, and indeed approaches Ephraim very nearly in this place. Ephraim loses but one place to the Canaanites, or at least there is but one loss recorded—that of Gezer. It is a most important place, however, being a Levitical city, and for what we have found it typify as that. Gezer means "isolation," "a place cut off;" as belonging to the Canaanites it is but the expression of natural independence, as away from God. But as Israelite and Levitical it speaks of that "land cut off" into which Christ has borne the sins of His people, and in which the independence of man is seen in its awful reality of isolation from God.* How the awful reality, if it be indeed entered into by the soul, will produce in it a horror of the liberty man loves away from God; and how this will turn to fruitfulness in joyful dependence upon Him who has brought us out of that darkness into His marvelous light, needs little telling. Alas for us, when the Canaanite hold upon Gezer has not been loosed! Ephraim's one city lost is no light loss!

(iii.) Zebulon loses two cities, Kitron and Nahalol; the first of which is nearly the same word as *Keturoth*, which in Ezek. xlvi. 22 is rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic, "small," and thus taken to represent Kattath, which in Josh. xix. 15 stands immediately before Nahalol. *Keturoth* is, however, generally taken, as in our common version, to mean "joined": which Hengstenberg (on Ezekiel) refuses again, for "fuming, smoking," undoubtedly the common, if not exclusive, sense in scriptural Hebrew. In the Chaldee (Dan. v. 6), however, the noun means "joints"; and the Talmudists use the verb in the same form as "joining."

On the whole, the Hebrew certainly favors the meaning of "fuming," either in the sense of perfuming or of using incense; above all, the latter. The identification with Kattath is very uncertain, and in the word of God every change in a name must have significance. In connection with Zebulon, where "dwelling in relationship" to God is plainly the thought, the lack of incense would have

* Will the reader note here a partial return to a former thought, disclaimed in the first line of the notes (Vol. I., page 342.), but which is not really inconsistent with the fact that atonement is not made or figured by the scapegoat. That it is not is plain from the passage in Leviticus; and yet it is not unsuitable, that where deliverance from the burden of sin is most fully proclaimed, there should be the tender and solemn reminder of the place in which this was borne and put away;—a thought which is needed to make the liberty derived from this a *holy* liberty, a deep and inward deliverance. Yet it is not in fact "death"—this "land cut off"—but a deeper thought.

4. Asher: failure in experience.

[4] "Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob; but the Asherites [j] dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.

5. Naphtali: failure in enjoyed relationship to God.

[5] [k] Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and the inhabitants of Bethanath became tributary to them.

*i cf.* Num. 1. 40, 41 with Nu. 26. 47.

*j cf.* Gen. 13. 11–13. Rev. 2. 13–17. Ps. 106. 35.

*k cf.* Nu. 1. 42, 43 with Nu. 26. 50.

sad significance indeed—the lack of prayer and praise, along with that also of which Nahalol speaks—"pasture." These things do indeed go largely together, are enjoyed or lost together.

(iv.) Asher, under the number of experience, follows with a long list of cities; and here we find, for the first time, an expression which reveals at once a still lower state of things. "The Asherites," it is said, "dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land"—not simply, bad enough as that would be, the Canaanites among the Asherites. It is easy to understand it, inasmuch as the Phœnician sea-board was in the inheritance of Asher, and the prosperous, mercantile cities were never, even in the days of David and Solomon, brought into even modified subjection to Israel. They were then friends and allies, but not servants, although of the race of which it had been long before said, "A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

Three of the seven names that are found here are absent from the list in Joshua, and this, with the doubt attaching to the meaning of two of these, makes the first three difficult of interpretation. Of these Accho, the first, is given by some from the Arabic as "hot sand," or "sand heated by the sun;" but if taken as Hebrew, it would be, rather, "straitened." Zidon means "taking the prey." Ahlab is said to mean "fatness," the meaning given also (and rightly) to Helbah. It might be a compound word and signify "brother in heart;" but of none of these can I speak with any assurance.

The last four are plainer, and connect more simply together, three of them occuring in similar connection in the list in Joshua. Of these Achzib, "a flow indeed," has been already taken as applying to the Spirit. With this Helbah, "fatness," Aphik, "a channel," and Rehob, "room," are easily associated, and the last two have been already considered in this way (page 151). Together, the loss of these cities implies much spiritual loss to the failing Asherite: the *experience* (Achzib is in the fourth place) of the Spirit's energy; the "fatness" which speaks of plenteous nourishment; the ability to convey to others the blessing we have received; and lastly, liberty and enlargement of heart. How necessary these things are to true Christian happiness needs little to be affirmed.

(v.) Naphtali comes in the next place with two cities, Bethshemesh and Bethanath, names which are simple enough as "house of the sun" and "house of response." They require not much interpretation either: for if still "there be many that say, Who will show us any good?" every believing soul will with the psalmist be able for himself to find it in the light of God's countenance. This is alone our sun, and "a pleasant thing" indeed "it is to behold" it.

Bethanath, the "house of response," speaks of what surely goes with this,—the *answer* of God to the soul that seeks Him; the answer, too, again, of the soul to God: that sweet and tender intimacy of fellowship which is strength for all the way.

The "Beths" in both cases imply what is settled and abiding. The "house" is, as we say, the *home*, the place of relationship and of the interchange of affection.

The greater the blessing here, the greater the loss, of course. Naphtali, the

6. Dan: overcome instead of overcoming.

[6] And the Amorites [l]forced the children of Dan into the hill-country; for they would not suffer them to come down into the valley; and the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres, in Ajalon, and in Shaalbim; but the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, and they became tributary: and the border of the Amorites was from the ascent of Akrabbim, from the rock and upward.

[l] *cf.* ver. 32.

(II. 1-5.)

Governmental recompense.

5. And the [m]angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: I made you come up out of Egypt, and brought you into the land of which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will [n]never break my covenant with you; and ye shall make [o]no covenant with the inhabitants of this land: ye shall [p]break down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will [q]not drive them out from before you, and they shall be in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you. And so it was, when the angel of Jehovah said these words unto them, the people lifted up their voice and [r]wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim; and there they [s]sacrificed unto Jehovah.

[m] ch. 6. 8.

[n] Gen. 17. 7.

[o] Ex. 34. 12. Deut. 7. 2.

[p] Deut. 7. 5. Deut. 12. 3. ch. 6. 25.

[q] Josh. 23. 13.

[r] 1 Sa. 30. 4.

[s] *cf.* Gen. 12. 7, etc. ch. 6. 18-21.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. ii. 6–iii. 4.)

*The Breach with Jehovah.*

1. (ii. 6-10.) The obedience in Joshua's day.

[1] NOW [t]when Joshua had sent away the people, the children of Israel went every man to his inheritance to take possession of the land. And the people

[t] Josh. 21. 43.

struggler, needs this sanctuary home that he may be the overcomer that he is called to be. Alas, like the other tribes here, he is losing character; and the precious things which God has made his own are but witnesses of a glory which is now departed from him.

(vi.) Dan closes the tale of ruin with worse sorrow. He recedes from the seventh place in the Joshua list to the sixth in this; and the history shows the significance of the change. For the Danites are forced by the Amorites out of the valley, the low level so necessary for true spiritual judgment; and they dwelt, besides, in Mount Heres, the "mountain of the sun," in Ajalon and in Shaalbim. The last two speak, as we have elsewhere seen, of the judgment of the world, in its apprehensiveness of God, and in its hollowness at heart; if Mount Heres be in the same line with these, it would naturally speak of the world's self-glorification. The Danite would thus lose with these the ability for true judgment; and it is striking that it is to the Amorite (the "talker"?) that he loses them. The Amorite, we are told, had occupied all this land from its southern border.

(5) And now we find the pronounced judgment of God upon this wide-spread departure from His plain command. The angel of Jehovah who had in Joshua's day taken His place with them at Gilgal as Captain of the Lord's host, now comes from Gilgal to Bochim ("weepers") to announce to them His acceptance in righteous government of their own decision. They would not drive out the nations, and so He would not; and the consequences of this, again and again predicted, would come upon them. The people weep and sacrifice to Jehovah; but there is no real repentance: and this first step downward is soon followed by another in which the breach between them and Him is consummated.

SUBD. 2.

(1.) Idolatry had evidently never really been quite rooted out from among

[u] served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he did for Israel. And [v] Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in Mount Ephraim, on the north of the hill Gaash. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose [w] another generation after them who knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work that he had done for Israel.

u *cf.* Deut. 5. 3, 4. Josh. 24. 31.

v Josh. 24, 29, 30.

w *cf.* Ex. 1. 8. Deut. 6. 7, 20.

2. (II. 11-15.) Israel's strange gods.

2 And the children of Israel did the [x] evil thing in Jehovah's eyes, and served the Baals. And they forsook

x ch. 3. 7.

the children of Israel. Long afterward God reminds them by Amos how in the wilderness they had borne the tabernacle of Moloch, and Chiun their images, the star of their god which they had made for themselves (Am. v. 26); and Joshua's exhortation at the close of his life to "put away the strange gods that were among" them, shows that even when they entered into the land, they had not fully cleansed themselves, nor turned to God with a perfect heart. True, externally no foreign worship was tolerated in Joshua's time, and in his days and those of the elders that outlived him, Israel generally served the Lord. But with the next generation decline became manifest. They had not seen the great works of the Lord, and the brief space that had elapsed was ample for forgetfulness. "Out of sight" was speedily "out of mind."

The Christian Church, in the same way, scarcely stood in any integrity during the lifetime of the apostles. Early in Paul's day he told the Thessalonians, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work;" and this, when John wrote his first epistle, had ripened into "many antichrists." The Church of uninspired history already retains but little semblance of its first condition. "As in water face answereth to face, so does the heart of man to man." And so in its general features does the Israelite history to that of the present dispensation. This is what makes the book of Judges so exceedingly important for us. We have here as in a glass, our own faces spiritually: a photograph of divine light that will not flatter.

There is a significant change in this connection of the name of Joshua's inheritance, from Timnath-*serah* to Timnath-*heres*. The one word is simply the reversal of the letters of the other, but the change of meaning is striking, if with Fuerst and others we take the latter to mean, not "sun," but "clay." An "*abundant* portion" becomes thus a "portion of clay." How striking if we think of the spiritual meaning! How indeed thus does the abundant heavenly portion into which Christ has entered vanish from sight, leaving Him only a "portion of clay"—an earthly one, expressed in its grossest form! And has not the Church in its decline lost sight of the heavenly portion and changed it, as it were, into mere earthliness? Or in its loss of the Lord as the Heavenly Man at the right hand of God, has it not, so to speak, left Him in the grave? All the more does this meaning come out in the position of this portion as given both in Joshua and here, "on the north of the hill Gaash," the *mystery* side of the "*quaking*" earth out of which the Lord rose! It is as we realize or not that of which this speaks, that we shall give our answer here. That quaking of the earth has its significance: that which is shaken can be removed. The "yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but also heaven," signifies, according to the apostle (Heb. xii. 26, 27), the "removal of those things that are shaken." For faith this was now taking place, and out of a judged world there was already beginning the call of a heavenly people.

(2.) Man must worship something. He has a religious instinct, an apprehension of some Power or Powers to which he is related, out of which he may per-

Jehovah the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and went after other gods, the gods of the peoples round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked Jehovah to anger. And they forsook Jehovah, and served [y]Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he [z]gave them into the

[y] Nu. 22. 41, etc.

[z] *cf.* Josh. 7. 12. Ps. 106. 41, 42.

haps reason himself, but which requires reason, however perverted, to accomplish this. Hence atheism is a disease of cultivation, and where it exists has still in general to do homage to what it denies, as in the Comtean worship of humanity itself. Hence fulfilling the well-known saying that if there were no God, it would be still necessary to invent one.

The Comtean worship reveals more than this: for in truth it is humanity that man, fallen away from God, everywhere worships. He may invest this with more or less of the attributes of deity: because he is not a being groping his way out of native darkness, as so many would persuade us; the inspired version of heathenism is more honoring to God, if more condemnatory of the creature, that "when they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." They had not to *invent God*, but rather to invent the god that they desired; and the god that they desired was one like themselves, a being who could sympathize with the lusts and passions of a corrupt nature. Hence "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the image of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man."

Higher they could not go; but they could go lower. In the creatures below man they could find represented the lower instincts, cravings, appetites of man, with no check of conscience or morality. In the beast there is an *un*moral nature, which may appear to sanction what in man is *im*moral. Thus came in the bestial gods of Egypt and elsewhere: "birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 23), became to them the images of the divine glory; and the infinite degradation degraded more and more the worshipers: they were assimilated to what they worshiped, and received back in divine government "that recompense of their error that was meet." The imagination of man was employed to throw a halo around what was utterly abominable. Taught by the sacred lips of parents, maintained by law, becoming more venerable continually with the passing of generations, conscience itself lost almost the power of protest against whatever enormities, and even came to confirm and enforce the putting of good for evil and evil for good, of darkness for light and of light for darkness.

Such was the devilish system to which Israel, with their back on God, now turned. "The children of Israel did the evil thing"—what was *emphatically* that—"in Jehovah's eyes, and served the Baals." "They forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtoreths."

Their gods, being the product of their own minds, were necessarily many as their minds were. The plural in both cases, it is allowed, stands not for the multiplicity of images, but for different modifications of the deity himself. Baal was in no wise one, as Jehovah was; nor was even Ashtoreth the same goddess everywhere, although the general idea was one. Baal means "husband" and "lord," with the primary idea of ownership. A bird even is a "baal of wing"; and a hairy man a "baal of hair." It does not stand so much for the idea of one who rules therefore, which is rather *adon*, from *din*, to "discern," to "judge." Yet it has no necessary bad sense either: in that of "husband," God uses it of His own relation to the people: "thy Maker is thy baal;" "though I was a baal unto them." (Isa. liv. 5; Jer. xxxi. 32.) Nevertheless, God finally repudiates the word. By Hosea He says, "Thou shalt call me *Ishi* [my husband], and thou shalt no more call me *Baali:* for I will take away the names of the Baals out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." (Hos. ii. 16, 17.)

hand of spoilers, and they spoiled them; and he sold them into the hand of their enemies round about, and they could not any longer stand before their enemies. [a] Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was upon them for evil, according as Jehovah had said, yea, as Jehovah had sworn to them: and they were straitened sore.

3. (ii. 16–18.) The judges as instruments of revival.

[3] And Jehovah [b] raised up judges, and they saved them out of their spoilers' hand; and yet they [c] hearkened not unto their judges, but went whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned [d] quickly out of the way in which their fathers had walked, obeying the commandments of Jehovah: not so did they. And when Jehovah raised up judges for them, then Jehovah was [e] with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for it [f] repented Jehovah because of their

a Deut. 28. 25.

b Acts 13.20. *cf.* Ps. 72. 2–4.

c Acts 7. 51, etc.

d Ex. 32. 8. Gal. i. 6. Ps. 106. 13.

e Josh. i. 5. 1Sam.3.19.

f Ps. 106.45. Ex. 32. 14.

The difference here is not hard to be made out. *Ishi* is, literally, "my man"; woman being *Ishah*, as "taken out of man." (Gen. ii. 23.) *Ishi* speaks, therefore, of one who fills the due place implied by the relationship, man being divinely fitted to woman, and woman to man. The *baal* might be in the relationship, and not rightly fill it. When God says, "*I* was a *baal* to them," or "Thy Maker is thy *baal*," it is the fact of who it is that is in this relation which assures us of the blessing implied. But *baal* thus being at the best indifferent, it is at last disclaimed, with all the abhorrence due to the false gods that had usurped Jehovah's place.

Baal stands thus for the power implied in possession, apart from any thought of how it may be used, as Ashtoreth speaks (comp. Josh. xxi. 27) of fruitfulness here in the nature-sense. Both might be used (and were) in the vilest applications; and unitedly they reveal the mystery of iniquity that is native in the heart of man. Power he seeks,—to have things in his hand: that, without question of how he will use it,—irresponsible power; while, underneath, the "lusts that war in his members" hold him as a poor slave to their will. Baal and Ashtoreth are twin worships, the natural complements of each other: both meaning independence of God, and together self-bondage; in which is found the awful tyranny of a more malignant despotism, that of the adversary of God and man alike, the "spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.)

Satan is thus the "prince of this world," and, spite of Christianity,—man, alas, not accepting the deliverance,—"the god" also "of this *age*." (2 Cor. iv. 4, *Greek*.) This he will be until the Lord comes, and he is cast into the "bottomless pit." (Rev. xx. 2.) This makes the effort at world-reform so hopeless, and is the only thing that can account for the history of Christendom. The Baals and the Ashtoreths have no more been kept out of the Christian than out of the Jewish inclosure: "while men slept, the enemy came" has repeated itself in the history of every spiritual movement. And as surely as in Israel's history here the Lord's chastening hand has had to be upon His people. Spoilers had spoiled them, and they could no longer stand before their enemies; and this for us also is, "as Jehovah has said—yea, as Jehovah has sworn": nor is He "man, that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent."

(3.) The means of deliverance was by the Lord's raising up judges—a remedy as plain as can be, though effectual only to a limited extent, the obstinate return to the old sins being consequent upon the passing away of the judge, if not before. Yet the remedy showed plainly the disease: deliverance could be only by *revival*, and this would be in self-judgment as to their condition, and return to

groaning by reason of those that oppressed them and crushed them.

4. (ii.19-iii. 4.) The nations left to prove Israel.

19 But so it was, when the judge [g] died, that they returned and corrupted themselves beyond their fathers, in going after other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. 20 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he said, Because this nation hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and hath not hearkened to my voice, 21 I also [h] will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 that through them I may [i] prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of Jehovah to walk therein, as their fathers kept it, or not. 23 And Jehovah left those nations, without driving them out hastily; and he gave them not up into the hand of Joshua.

iii. 1 Now these are the nations that Jehovah left, to prove Israel by them —as many as had not known all the wars of Canaan: 2 only that the generations of the children of Israel might know war by [j] learning it, such as before did not know it: 3 five lords of [k] the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, even the Sidonians and the Hivites dwelling in the Lebanon hill-country, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath. 4 And they were to prove Israel by, to know whether they would hearken to the commandments of Jehovah which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

[g] ch. 8. 33. *cf.* Acts 20. 29.

[h] *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 16.

[i] *cf.* Deut. 7. 22. ch. 3. 4.

[j] *cf.* 2 Sam. 22. 35.

[k] Josh. 13. 2, 3. *cf.* Mat. 13. 24-30.

Him from whom they had departed. The "judge" plainly was not merely such between man and man, but above all was the leader in the people's repentance and return to God—the representative of Jehovah's law and sway in Israel.

(4.) Spite of all this, the course of things all through—apart from such interruptions—is ever downward: "when the judge died they returned and corrupted themselves beyond their fathers." Correspondingly, even the deliverances become less and less full, and the character of the deliverers deteriorates (although this not continuously), until they reach together their lowest point in Samson, whose death still leaves the people in captivity. In view of this God declares that He will not drive out the nations that remain, but will leave them for a trial to Israel, and that they may know war by experience, the war of conquest not having had its due effect. The very trial thus which comes in through sin, He makes a means of practising faith, for those who have faith. Since by the history of their fathers they had not learnt the need of obedience and reliance upon the living God, they should learn these by practically meeting these enemics that their fathers met. Their discipline should be a school of faith. This, it is evident, applies to many more than Israel in the book of Judges, or than to such wars as these of Canaan. All the long series of evils that have afflicted the Church as the result of multiplied departure from God and from His word, have furnished for faith the exercise by which it is made to overcome. The history in all alike becomes, however, thus largely individual. The people disappear as a whole from sight, or furnish a background in the front of which a few figures walk apart. There are men of God, indeed, but where are the *people* of God? Yet divine love cannot forget these, nor can the hearts therefore of those in whom this love has stirred.

## DIVISION 2. (Chap. iii. 5–xvi.)

*Bondage and Deliverances.*

### SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. iii. 5–11.)

*The first step toward ruin—independence of God.*

AND the children of Israel dwelt in the midst of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. And they [l]took their daughters to themselves as wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did the thing that was [m]evil in Jehovah's eyes, and forgot Jehovah their God, and served the Baals and the Asherahs. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he [n]sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia*; and the children of Israel served

[l] Josh. 23. 12. Ezr. 9. 2. 1 Ki. 11. 1–3. 2 Cor. 6. 14.

[m] ver. 12.

[n] Deut. 32. 30. ch. 10. 7.

* "Aram of the two rivers."

DIV. 2.

In the second division we have the history of the captivities and deliverances which fill the body of the book. In these we find the exemplification of the Lord's words that "he that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." (Jno. viii. 34, R. V.) In the shadows of spiritual things which are presented here, we shall find how truly it is the sins committed by them that lead men captive. We shall find, also, as we might be sure beforehand, the deliverance in each case to figure what is truly that—the deliverer being, in fact, the divine Judge, and acting in this character.

SUBD. 1.

The first of these captivities gives us the root-principle of all, which is indeed but sin, and sin has but one definition in Scripture—"lawlessness" (1 Jno. iii. 4): rightly so given in the Revised Version, where the common one has "the transgression of the law." This the word does not mean; and the real thought is a much deeper one. Where law is, sin manifests itself in the transgression of it: of that there is, of course, no question; nay, it was the purpose of the law to manifest it, and "by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.) "I had not known sin," says the apostle, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet"—"lust;" "but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lust" (vii. 7, 8). Sin therefore is deeper and more radical than even the "lust" which it works. Sin is the parent; lust is the child. "Lawlessness" is the unsubject spirit of self-will, which in the creature away from God shows itself as want, in cravings which find no satisfaction, and thus rule the man. "Their god is their belly," says the apostle, of such. (Phil. iii. 19.) This is the misery of the creature out of the creature's place, of independence on the part of one who is necessarily dependent.

This is what is seen in the people here. They forget Jehovah their God, form alliances with the people round them after their own will, and end in bondage to false gods—the Baals and the Asherahs, or images of Ashtoreth. Jehovah sells them therefore into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, and they serve him for eight years.

This king of Mesopotamia, what does he represent? If it be indeed the chain of our own sins that holds us, then he should in some way be the reflection of the people's condition. His name is a remarkable one, meaning "blackness of double wickedness;" and the dual form here one can hardly avoid connecting

Chushan-rishathaim [o]eight years. And the children of Israel [p]cried to Jehovah, and Jehovah raised up for the children of Israel a saviour, and he saved them, [q]Oth-

o ver. 14. *cf.* Jer. 25. 11, 12. Lk. 21. 24.

*p* ver. 15, etc. Ps. 107. 13. *cf.* Zech. 12. 10-14. *q* ch. 1. 13. *cf.* Gal. 2. 11, 12.

with that of the country over which he rules, which is literally "Aram of the two rivers." Aram means "exalted," and is taken generally to refer to the "high land" of Syria, as contrasted with the Canaanitish "lowland;" but, whatever truth there may be in this, we may be sure it does not exclude that spiritual application for which we are in search all through, and which as such is necessarily of so much higher importance.

Aram was the fifth son of Shem, whose children taken together, and with his own, present a group of names of remarkable significance. Shem means "name," and his blessing is in his connection with Jehovah his God, who reveals Himself to him, makes him, that is, to know His Name. Shem is thus marked out as the vessel of divine revelation.

His sons' names seem to carry on this thought, the numerical order certifying it throughout. Here we have—

1. Elam, which, as a form of *olam*, is the ordinary Hebrew word for "everlasting." This is the first and simplest thought of God, the first word of revelation as to Him.

2. Asshur, "step," speaks of it as progressive. Only little by little has God, in fact, been able to declare Himself (Heb. i. 1); hindered, as is plain, by the needs of man himself, who had to be prepared to receive the revelation. Nay, when the dispensations were ready, man was not; and He in whom at length God spake to man face to face was taken by wicked hands, crucified, and slain. Yet this also was in the counsels of God for the meeting of man's deepest need, as we well know; and thus alone was accomplished the full manifestation of Himself.

3. Three is the number of manifestation, and if the names here speak as we credit them with doing, Arphaxad (properly Arphachshad) should give voice to this. It is confessedly a difficult word to interpret, and the meaning assigned by Ewald, "stronghold of the Chaldees," spite of its acceptance by some authorities, seems everyway strained and fanciful. "One that heals," or "releases," has been suggested with much more probability; but this in fact only accounts for the first two syllables of the name, to which the last would add the thought of pouring out, our own word "shed" being probably derived from it, and certainly its equivalent. But how clearly and appropriately would "remitting by shedding forth" speak of the great mystery of the Cross, the mystery in which God is truly manifest! How can it be accounted for, that every thing so perfectly fits together but by the truth of what is so consistently shown forth?

4. Then, in the fourth place, which we know to be that of the creature, we have what as fully agrees with it, yet how strangely in the revelation of God—Lud, "born"! Yet so must He be, who, being God, becomes the Saviour of men, to remit by shedding forth: and "without shedding of blood is no remission." Coming down, then, to man's estate, and as man dying for us, He rises up into the place of power—power acquired by suffering; and of this—

5. Aram, "exalted," under the number which speaks of *reward*, fittingly and finally speaks. Thus the series is evidently complete.

That we may adopt every safeguard against deception, however, let us, from the same genealogy in Genesis, consider in the same way the sons of Aram, who ought, one would say, to continue this line of thought, and speak of the fruits of this exaltation of the man Christ Jesus to the place where now we know Him. The sons of Aram are four: "Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash;" and this is as far as his line is continued in Scripture.

niel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of Jehovah was upon him; and he [r]judged Israel and went out to war; and Jehovah gave Chushan- | [r] *cf.* Josh. 7. 12.

1. Uz, from atzah, "made firm." This is numerically plain, and plain also in its application to the risen and glorified Saviour. The abiding place He has taken as Man, He has taken also *for men*, His people. Our position is the fruit of His position: we are one with Him—identified with Him—accepted in the Beloved;" and this is evidently the fundamental blessing for us in connection with His exaltation. That is, Uz is, in spiritual order, as well as in the genealogical table, the first son of Aram.

2. Hul is the second son. And Hul (*chul*), from *chalal*, would mean "opened, penetrated, entered into." This under the number of association, fellowship, and in the connection in which we find it here, cannot be for a moment doubtful as to its meaning. Christ exalted has entered the sanctuary for us; the veil is rent, and God is in the light: our fellowship is with the Father and the Son. This too is in perfect spiritual order: Hul follows Uz at once, but could not precede him.

3. We have Gether—a very difficult word. Gesenius, collating with the Syriac, gives it the meaning of "dregs, sediment"—every way an unlikely and unsuitable one. If Hebrew, it would seem to be a contraction from two words, which may be *gahah* and *jether*. The first of these means to "heal, restore"; the second we have had in its intensive form in Jattir (page 110, *n*), and means "excellence," or "exceedingly more." If Gether might thus speak of a restoration going beyond the original condition, it would suit the number, which is that of revival, recovery, and the line of thought as well. Yet this interpretation is, of course, conjectural only, to be held only as long as there is nothing better.

4. Mash, from *mush*, is to "feel"—to "know by feeling"; and, in the fourth place, shows what the Lord as man has taken up with Him to His place of exaltation. Its appositeness in this series of names of the ascended Lord, none will deny. And thus the meaning of Aram, as we have taken it, seems confirmed on all sides.

Beautiful, however, as are these names thus joined together, we easily understand how in a world like this, and as connected with the human generations for which they stand, they soon scatter and fall away from one another, and thus lose their meaning and their beauty as united. The sentences become but broken words, capable of very different, even of opposite, suggestion. The Shemite families, as they scattered and multiplied into nations, lost almost entirely the promise of their origin. Their primitive worship became corrupted into a dark and debasing idolatry; and the Aram-naharaim of the book of Judges is ruled over by the ominous king whom we find now tyrannizing over Israel.

The resemblance of Mesopotamia to Egypt is striking enough. They are alike oases which interrupt a broad belt of desert land which stretches from West to East across Africa and Asia, "reaching from the Atlantic on the one hand nearly to the Yellow Sea on the other." It is a low level plain as far as the country we are speaking of, afterwards rising in high plateaus "having from 3,000 to near 10,000 feet of elevation." "Where the belt of sand is intersected by the valley of the Nile, no marked change of elevation occurs; and the continuous low desert is merely interrupted by a few miles of green and cultivable land, the whole of which is just as smooth and flat as the waste on either side of it." Egypt, as we know, is the product of its great river; and so also with the country with which we have now to do. "Known to the Jews as Aram-naharaim, or 'Syria of the two rivers;' to the Greeks and Romans as Mesopotamia, or 'the between-river country'; to the Arabs as Al-Jezireh, or 'the island,' this district has always taken its name from the streams which constitute its most striking feat-

rishathaim, king of Aram, into his hand, and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. And the land was quiet *forty years, and Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

* ver.30,etc. *cf.* Deut. 8. 2. *ctr.* Is. 2. 4. Heb. 4. 8,9.

ure, and to which, in fact, it owes its existence. If it were not for the two great rivers—the Tigris and Euphrates—with their tributaries, the more northern part of the Mesopotamian lowland would in no respect differ from the Syro-Arabian desert on which it adjoins, and which in latitude, elevation, and general geological character, it exactly resembles. Toward the south the importance of the rivers is still greater; for of lower Mesopotamia it may be said, with more truth than of Egypt, that it is 'an acquired land,' the actual 'gift' of the two streams which wash it on either side; being, as it is, entirely a recent formation—a deposit which the streams have made in the shallow waters of a gulf, into which they have flowed for many ages." (*Rawlinson.*) Thus both Lower and Upper Egypt are represented in what is indeed Aram of the two rivers.

And to this we may add the name of the king as a further link. Chushan and Cush are radically the same, and the Cushite kingdom of Nimrod had long before been established on the Euphrates. But Cush was the brother of Mizraim, the founder of Egypt, and the Cushites derived from Egypt their religion. One branch of them were the Ethiopians of history, whose name with those of Cush and Ham speaks of their dark complexion.

This Hamite kingdom among the Shemites is itself an evidence of degradation, which the emphatic title of "doubly wicked" for the king confirms and intensifies. As already said, one can hardly help connecting it with the "double river" of the land over which he reigns, and this would be strictly according to the similitude of Egypt, whose river became their dependence, sustaining them in their independence of heaven. Man's blessings lead him thus (how often!) away from the Giver of them; and the greater the blessing, the farther from God: the greater the goodness He has shown, the worse the corruption of it. Now Aram, as we have seen, speaks of humanity exalted in Christ, man in the fullest blessing he can know, and thus in the typical application the intensity of evil connected with it here may be accounted for. Even the apostle, after being taken up to Paradise, needed a thorn in the flesh to prevent self-exaltation. And the professing Church, how soon did it become lifted up with pride, to fall into depths of unimaginable wickedness! Babylon stood in lower Mesopotamia, and thus we may see how consistent are the surroundings of the picture put before us here.

In its fruits, however multiform, evil is, in its essential principle, absolutely one. The creature leaving the creature place—setting itself up in independence of God:—this is its character at bottom ever. Thus the light is darkened with us, and the terrible slavery to a depraved will results. We need not, therefore, be at a loss as to what Chushan-rishathaim represents. The first step on the downward path to ruin is always the same.

Othniel is here the suited deliverer. No details of the warfare are recorded at all; our eyes are kept fixed upon the man himself. It is repeated for us that he is in close relation with Caleb, the "whole-hearted," and the son of Kenaz, "recipient of strength." His own name is more doubtful: from the Arabic it has been taken to be "lion of God"; Jerome gave it as "my time is of God"; others again give "God is power." In any case the consciousness of dependence is emphasized, and its relation to single-eyed obedience; and thus we have what is the key-note of victory over the king of Aram. Let us remember, although we shall not have the mere repetition of this in after-deliverances, that this is really fundamental to them all. Not till we get back to this is the path of departure retraced to its beginning, and the restoration of the soul effected. Notice the order here: "and he judged Israel, and went out to war." Thus he prevails.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. iii. 12–31.)

*The Moabite and Philistine inroads: profession.*

(III. 12–31.)

Moab: a barren profession.

1. AND [t]again the children of Israel did the evil thing in Jehovah's eyes, and Jehovah [u]strengthened Eglon king of [v]Moab against Israel, because they had done the thing that was evil in Jehovah's eyes. And he gathered unto him the children of [w]Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and took possession of the [x]city of palms. And the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab [y]eighteen years. And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, and Jehovah

[t] ch. 4.1, etc. *cf.* Hos. 6. 4.

[u] *cf.* Ex. 9. 16.

[v] Gen. 19. 37. *cf.* Gal. 5. 16.

[w] 2 Chr. 20. 1, etc.

[x] ch. 1. 16.

[y] ver. 8.

SUBD. 2.

1. In the second captivity it is Moab into whose hands they fall; and now we begin to see the definite forms of evil that have afflicted the church. Moab, if we have interpreted rightly, stands for mere profession (Deut. ii. 8 sq. *n.*); and it was not long before this condition, in fact, arose. The first parable of the kingdom (Matt. iii.) prepares us for it. The epistles show us the increase of the false disciples, for which the epistle of John provides tests. The book of Revelation shows us the church at Sardis already dead, and others in various not far removed conditions. Church-history, outside of Scripture, too sadly confirms what such things imply: the church proper soon becomes what is sorrowfully known as the church invisible.

Eglon is king of Moab at this time. His name we have seen as that of one of the cities of Canaan taken by Joshua, and it should have the same significance. There we saw it as reminding us of the perpetual revolution of earthly things, like that of the earth itself, swinging in its yearly orbit. So with the changing seasons all things change and pass—everything fair in its season, and only for its season. Now the church, becoming characteristically profession merely, comes under this law of change and decay, under which the world is. Earthly conditions influence and give it shape. Providences—"bit and bridle"—rule it, and not Scripture. It becomes the creature of circumstances, exalted by the favor of man, depressed if this is withdrawn. The world, under its law of change and decay, was no such mystery to the wise man in Israel as the phases of the church are to the man who has been taught of God its principles and privileges. And the fundamental reason for this condition, next to and proceeding from the root of independence which we have already looked at, is to be found in a Moabite conquest—such as here the history of Israel so vividly depicts.

With the Moabite, Ammon and Amalek come into the land; and this is perfectly simple and intelligible. An unconverted profession gathers to itself all heresies and makes room for all the lusts of the flesh. Then they take the "city of palms" (Jericho, without the name—Deut. xxxiv. 3), and the world revives there under Moabite protection and the cover of practical righteousness, which the palm-tree, as we know, represents. This is always the strong point for the professor: "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

Moab's limit, however, as we find presently, is at Gilgal.* The memorials of

* The *pesilim*, which I have translated "[boundary] stones", are mostly translated either "quarries" or "graven images;" but Dr. Cassel, in Lange's Commentary, says:—

"Boundary-stones" "is evidently the sense in which *pesilim* is to be taken. *Pesil* is always a carved image, γλυπτόν. The entire number of instances in which this word is used by Scripture writers fails to suggest any reason for thinking here of 'stone-quarries,' a definition which, moreover, does not appear to harmonize with the locality. But as the connection implies that the borders of Eglon's territory, which he had wrenched from Israel, were at the *pesilim*, we must understand by them the posts, στῆλαι, stones, *lapides sacri*, which marked the line. In consequence of the honors everywhere paid them, these were considered *pesilim*, idol-images. This border-line was in the vicinity of Gilgal, which had not fallen into the hands of Moab. Ewald has rightly insisted that Gilgal must have lain north-east of Jericho."

raised them up a saviour, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a man [z]lamed of his right hand. And the children of Israel sent him with a present in his hand to Eglon king of Moab. And Ehud made him a [a]dagger which had two edges, a cubit long; and he girded it under his robe upon his right thigh. And he brought the present to Eglon king of Moab; now Eglon was a very [b]fat man; and when he had made an end of offering the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. But he turned back from the [boundary-] stones that were at [c]Gilgal, and said, I have a secret word for thee, O king. And he said, Be silent; and all that stood round him went out from him. And Ehud came to him; and he was sitting in the cool upper room which was for himself alone; and Ehud said, I have a word from [d]God for thee: and he rose from the seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and struck it into his [e]belly. And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade: for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and it came out behind. And Ehud went out into the porch, and shut the doors of the upper room upon him, and fastened them. And when he had gone out, the [king's] servants came, and when they saw that the doors of the upper room were fastened, they said, Surely he is covering his feet in the cool chamber. And they waited till they were ashamed, and behold, he did not open the doors of the upper room; therefore they took the key and opened them, and behold their lord fallen to the ground dead. But Ehud had escaped while they were hesitating; he had [f]passed the [boundary-] stones and escaped to Seirath. And it was so, when he had come, that he blew a [g]trum-

z *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.

a *cf.* Heb. 4. 12.

b *cf.* Ps. 73. 7.

c Josh. 5. 2, etc. *cf.* Col. 2. 11. Col. 3. 5.

d *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8.

e Phil. 3. 19.

f *cf.* Rom. 6. 2, etc.

g ch. 6. 34. *cf.* Nu. 10. 1-10.

death passed through and a resurrection standing will necessarily be outside of Moab's possession. All this is of quite simple interpretation to any who have learned the lessons of the book of Joshua.

As to the deliverer, he is Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite; and it is Benjamin's territory upon which Eglon has obtained lodgment. This, again, is simple for a spiritual mind. For Benjamin, standing for Christ in us, it is here that we find what most of all the life of mere profession denies and sets aside. Thus, too, it must be with Benjamin that deliverance lies. Then he is Ehud, from the same root as Judah, which, as we have seen, speaks literally of *con*fession, the opposite of mere *pro*fession. Ehud is the "confessor," and the son of Gera —that is, as it would seem, "rumination," that heart-meditation by which the things of Christ are appropriated and become the possession of the soul. Ehud is, then, the God-prepared deliverer for Israel in their present emergency.

The details of the deliverance, however, are less easy to understand. The dagger or sword (according to the root-idea, the "implement of destruction") would stand, according to Eph. vi., for the "word of God." Ehud, like many other Benjamites of his day, was "bound of his right hand," and uses it with his left. Does this speak of the infirmity in which the man in Christ glories, that the power of Christ may rest upon him? From Gilgal, with its inspiriting memories, Ehud turns back to Eglon, and escapes beyond it again to Seirah,

pet in Mount Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. And he said unto them, [h]Follow me: for Jehovah hath given your enemies the Moabites into your hands. And they went down after him and seized the fords of [i]Jordan toward Moab, and let [j]no man pass over. And they smote of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all stout men, and all men of valor; and not a man escaped. So Moab was humbled that day under the hand of Israel. And the land was [k]quiet eighty years.

(III. 32.)

Philistines: Judæo-Christianity.

2. And after him was [l]Shamgar the son of Anath; and he smote of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad: and he too saved Israel.

h *cf.* Phil. 3. 17.

i *cf.* Gal. 6. 14.

j *ctr.* 1 Sam. 15. 7-9.

k ch. 5. 31, etc.

l 1 Sam. 13. 19-22. *cf.* Eccl. 12. 11.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Chap. iv. v.)

*The Canaanite revival: the spirit of gain.*

(IV. 1-29.)

The cause of the conflict, and the forces arrayed.

1. AND the children of Israel [m]again did the thing that was evil in Jehovah's eyes; and Ehud was dead. And Jehovah sold them into the hand of [n]Jabin

m ch. 6. 1.

n *cf.* Josh. 11. 1 with 2. Pet. 1. 9.

"the rugged." Then he sounds a trumpet in Mount Ephraim, out of which the children of Israel hasten in response, and Jordan, which, by the power of God, Israel had passed over dry-shod, becomes the effectual doom of Moab, not a man of whom escapes their enemies' swords.

So much we may in some measure apprehend; but it is a meagre enough account of a great deliverance.

2. Next we hear of Shamgar, and a victory at great odds over the Philistines. Whether the Moabite inroad had encouraged their attack or not, it is given as something contemporaneous with or following upon it. And the spiritual connection is quite evident, if the Philistines represent the Judaistic development of the world-church, perfected in Rome. To this the Moabite condition of unconverted membership—impossible, of course, in the body of Christ—is a necessary preliminary. The Philistines, however, do but show themselves as yet: the time of the captivity to them is later, and ends the series. At present Shamgar's bold deed is decisive as deliverance.

Shamgar's name seems but the inversion of Gershom, and to have the same meaning—of a stranger (or sojourner) there. He is the son of Anath, which means "answer": here speaking, as it seems, of the response of heart to that deliverance call which invites us forth to pilgrimage. Such an one is surely the fit deliverer from the world-church, and for the present Shamgar's ox-goad avails.

SUBD. 3.

1. The third subdivision is the history of a great Canaanite revival, in which appear once more a Jabin and a Hazor, the reproduction of the leader and city of the old northern confederacy against Joshua of one hundred and thirty years before. Some have even attempted to identify these two kings, and to make Barak a contemporary of Joshua himself—an attempt which even Farrar (Smith's Dictionary of the Bible) regards with no disfavor. But on the contrary the very pith of the lesson lies in this being a *revival*, with which the numerical place perfectly corresponds. It is the only section in which we find Israel's sin in sparing and allying themselves with the nations under ban from God, bringing forth its perfect fruit. It thus should have an exceptional importance.

How easy is such springing up again from a root not destroyed, we have been already reminded of in the case of Hormah and of Luz. The application in

king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, and the captain of his host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the nations. And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah; for he had nine hundred [o] chariots of iron; and he mightily oppressed the children of Israel twenty years. And [p] Deborah, a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she was dwelling under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim; and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of [q] Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah the God of Israel commanded, Go and draw towards Mount Tabor, and take with thee [r] ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulon; and I will [s] draw unto thee, to the stream Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's host, with his chariots and his multitude, and I will give him into thy hand. And Barak

o ch. 1. 19.

p *cf.* 1 Tim. 2. 12 with ver. 9.

q Josh. 20. 7.

r *ctr.* ch. 7. 2-7.

s Ex. 14. 4.

spiritual experience is most easy and abundant. The failure of Christian vigor permits once more the old besetments to appear again; and the new sins are but the old ones, though perhaps indeed with a certain disguise. The old character displays itself. The "Israel" of awhile ago is now again "Jacob." Indeed, deeper than all differences, and surely to be found amid all disguises, there is a moral unity in sin. "We have turned every one to *his own* way," shows at once both the unity and the diversity.

That it is Jabin, of all the Canaanite kings, that we find thus revived, must, of course, have its significance also. The revival of the Canaanite would naturally be shown in one who is, in some sense at least, the typical Canaanite. Nothing can be in Scripture which does not speak to the ear that is open. Jabin, too, is emphatically here, not merely, as in the book of Joshua, "king of Hazor," but, over and over again, "king of Canaan." The meaning of these names we already know. Jabin means "discerning"; Hazor, "inclosure." As the enemy of the people of God, it is the wisdom of the world with which we have here to do—a wisdom which reigns in its own "inclosure," shut up, as is the constant fashion, in cliques and parties and philosophies, by which it elevates itself over what is outside its boundary. The spirit of it is easily manifest as that of self: self-interest, self-assertion, self-satisfaction, the true "trader" or Canaanite spirit, that of gain. The inroad of this into the Church was early indeed. "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ," was said, in the apostle's days, of those at Rome. (Phil. ii. 21.) Of the Ephesian elders it was prophesied, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 30.) But already at Corinth the sects and parties produced by such attempts were being formed, as we know, and the true people of God were becoming subject to Jabin's rule; and this has developed much more widely since, even until the Church of God has been broken up into various denominations, to the dishonor of the *One* Name which is upon us all. This, then, is the true Canaanite revival shadowed here.

The captain of Jabin's host is Sisera, whose name means, according to Gesenius, "battle-array"; and who dwells in Harosheth ("carving, cutting, artificers' work") of the nations. Such names should not be difficult to read in such a connection. The strife of sects, the *odium theologicum*, is notorious; and how the sects themselves are thus maintained needs no insisting on. Sisera is still captain of the host. The very truths of God's word are often arrayed against one another, and, allied with errors of greater or less gravity, become but the battle-cries of partisans. And when we realize whom the Canaanite leaders represent

said unto her, 'If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; and if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee; nevertheless there will be no glory for thee upon the way thou goest; for Jehovah selleth Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Ke- | *t cf.* Ex. 4. 13, 14.

—"the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places"—how serious becomes the aspect of evil here! The assault of Satan is most of all against the truth, the power of which he recognizes well enough, and which he can no more easily prevail against than by dividing it, so to speak, against itself, and allying it with some deceit of his own devising. Thus what is of God is prejudiced in the eyes of His people by the associations in which they find it; while, on the other hand, many, seeing it to be truth, are put off their guard as to these, and receive along with it some deadly error. How, for instance, has the truth of the Lord's coming been mixed up with the abominations of materialism, the denial of eternal punishment, and many another thing, until the very one whose heart would welcome it, if otherwise presented, looks upon it as a synonym for heresy of this kind! How important, therefore, here is God's word to Jeremiah, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." (Jer. xv. 19.) But, in general, how little are we able to find the truth in the creed of another! in another sense than the true, what one sees in the Shulamite is indeed "but the company of two armies." On both sides the truth suffers, while it is made the power and preservative principle of error itself, which, if simply that, would soon find at the hands of every Christian its merited judgment.

Yet it is the truth that must come in for deliverance here, as is quite plain; and Deborah the prophetess stands, according to the meaning of her name, for the "Word" itself, prophetic as in its office it truly is, the word of God which brings the soul into the presence of Him before whom all the secrets of the heart are laid bare, and with whom we have to do. But for this the Word must be, as Deborah was, united to another. She is the wife of Lapidoth, which means "burning torches," and reminds us of the Pentecostal tongues of fire, the manifest type of the Spirit in His utterance among men. Deborah judges Israel under the palm-tree of Deborah, the palm-tree being the well-known symbol of the righteous, fruit, as this character is, of such judgment by the Word, "between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim,"—an "exalted" Christ in heaven, and the "house of God" on earth.

There is fullness of meaning in such a picture: for here are the two things that give us the standard for self-judgment. Everything as to our position before God is implied in Christ's own position as exalted now. In the house of God we have implied the descent and indwelling of the Spirit, with the holiness that becomes that house. It is in view of these wondrous truths that the word of God addresses itself now to the people of God, to maintain in them that practical righteousness of which the palm-tree speaks. Certainly here is no hap-hazard association of thought.

While in all the book of Judges the necessity of self-judgment is shown in order to deliverance, this, then, is now especially emphasized in Deborah, as is plain. As there is on the one side manifest a peculiar power of the enemy in the Canaanite uprising, so there is on the other a dwelling on that which is, above all things, necessary to take one out of his hand, the lowly, self-judged spirit of him who "trembleth at the Word."

We have now the captain on the side of Israel: "she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-Naphtali." Barak means "lightning,"—light (and God is light) revealed in judgment. To bring God in is the exposure and overthrow of error. The day of manifestation is the day of judgment, when all falsehood expires forever, and no self-deception is any longer possible. Barak is "the son of Abinoam," that is, "father of pleasantness": for the destruction of

desh. And Barak called Zebulon and Naphtali to Kedesh, and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet; and Deborah went up with him. And [u]Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, of the children of Hobab, the brother in law of Moses, and pitched his tent near Elon-Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh.

[u] ch. 1. 16.

(IV. 12-24.)

The Conflict.

2. And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor; and Sisera summoned all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him from Harosheth of the nations to the stream Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath given Sisera into thy hand: is not Jehovah [v]gone forth before thee? And Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him; and Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all the chariots, and all the host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sis-

[v] 2 Sa. 5. 24.

error is that that which is pleasant may remain, the good and perfect and acceptable will of God. Love rejoices in this overthrow; and although where His creatures are in question, judgment is "His strange work," yet here also our comfort it is to know that, in its sternest and dreadest forms, the Lamb will execute it. Barak is still and ever the son of Abinoam.

Deborah calls Barak out of Kedesh-Naphtali, the "sanctuary of the struggler," which we have seen to speak of rest in self-abasement, and, as a city of refuge, of the work of Christ. Here is in fact that from which deliverance springs, and the condition also in which it can be made good to us.

Naphtali and Zebulon are the tribes used of God in the conflict, as their land is that in which the oppressor's power is found. What these speak of we already know. The enfeeblement of Zebulon, (the dwelling in that which is our own in the relationship which God has given us to Himself,) is a manifest result of the revival of that seeking of our own things which is, as we have seen, what is indicated by this Canaanite revival. It is no less true that Zebulon must have been enfeebled first, before Jabin could have got foothold there at all. These things are indeed an admonition for us. But Hazor itself is significantly in the territory of Naphtali, the struggler and the overcomer, being but the perversion of the true Naphtali spirit. How many are involved in the sectarian strife of tongues, supposing all the while that they are doing the Lord service! While, on the other hand, it is plain that Naphtali is thus prostrate where Jabin reigns. These things might be expanded largely and applied to the condition of things in the midst of which we are to-day; but we have not space for it. Those who desire to do so can without much difficulty trace them out: "the knowledge of the Holy is understanding."

Purpose of heart is required to be with Barak, who therefore is bidden to "draw toward Mount Tabor"—the "mount of purpose." It is here that one finds elevation to view the battlefield, and a place of strength against the adversary. Here God draws Sisera to the stream Kishon which is to sweep his host away. Sisera himself is reserved to fall by the hand of the woman. We shall look at all that is connected with this in the next section.

2. The conflict at once begins. The free and independent movement of the Spirit of God at once awakens alarm in the enemy, and Sisera summons all his forces together against Israel; but the battle is the Lord's, and the issue never doubtful. The host is discomfited and annihilated; and Sisera flees away by himself to the tent of Jael.

era came down from the chariot and fled away on his feet. And Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the nations, and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword: there was not left so much as one. But Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went forth to meet Sisera, and said unto him, [w]Turn in, my lord, turn in to me: fear not. And he turned in to her into the tent; and she covered him with the rug. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty: and she opened the milk-skin, and gave him to drink, and covered him. And he said unto her, Stand at the entrance of the tent; and it shall be, when any man doth come to inquire of thee, and say, Is there a man here? thou shalt say, No. And Jael, the wife of Heber, took the [z]tent-pin, and took the hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and drove the pin into his temples, and it sank into the ground: for he was fast asleep, and weary. So he died. And behold, Barak pursued Sisera; and Jael went forth to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou art seeking. And when he came to her, behold, there was Sisera lying dead, and the tent-pin was in his temples. So God subdued on that day Jabin king of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the

*w* *cf.* Josh. 2. 3–5.

*x* ch. 3. 31. *cf.* Heb. 11. 13.

A second woman now becomes prominent in the story. From the Kenites, whom we have seen making their "nest" in Judah, one man had separated himself with his family, and traveling north as far as the portion of Naphtali, had pitched his tent by Elon-zaananim, "the oak of ladings," which is by Kedesh. We must put these things together in order to read them aright. Realizing the character of these Kenites, as we have traced it in the first chapter, we cannot but take it as a sign for good in Heber that he has separated himself from them. His name, however, "companion, fellow," or else like Hebron, "company, fellowship," would intimate that separation, as shown in him, is not to be taken as in the spirit of independency, but the opposite. Typically, at least, we may find in him another Abraham, whose break with his kindred naturally is in order to walk with God. Accordingly we find him in the territory of Naphtali, the overcomer, and at the "oak of ladings," the place of strength acquired in daily taking up the burdens of the day (see ante, page 152); in close connection, also, with Kedesh.

Heber's wife is Jael, which, while it is the word for "wild goat," means, literally, the "climber"—"one who mounts, or ascends." The women of Scripture (as in Sarah, Hagar, etc.) often stand, as another has remarked, for fruitful principles embraced by the men who represent the individual state. Here Jael, as the "seeking things above," is in beautiful connection with Heber's strangership and communion both. Nor need we wonder to find the tent-pin an effective weapon in her hands. Is it not a heart in heaven that destroys the spirit of sectarian strife, with that which secures the pilgrim's tent? Such things do not seem hard to translate into the spiritual; and there is a self-consistency in the whole meaning as so given which ought to secure for it respectful consideration. Even the peace between the house of Heber and Jabin, and Jael's deception of Sisera, seem quite capable of consistent rendering; and may connect together thus, as in

hand of the children of Israel waxed [y]continually heavier against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had cut off Jabin king of Canaan.

The prophetic song.

(V.)

1. Cause of the bondage.

3. [1]Then sang [z]Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam in that day, saying:

For the work of deliverance in Israel,—
For the [a]self-devotion of the people,
[b]Bless ye Jehovah!

[c]Hear, O kings, give ear, ye counsellors:
Unto Jehovah I, [even] I, will sing;
I will sing psalms to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

Jehovah, when Thou [d]wentest forth from Seir,
When Thou movedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth quaked; yea, the heavens dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water;
The mountains shook at the presence of Jehovah,
That Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, God of Israel.

In the days of [e]Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,

*y* Ps. 18. 37.

*z* Ex. 15. 1, etc.

*a* ver. 9. Rom. 12. 1.

*b* Ps. 149, etc.

*c* *cf.* Deut. 32. 1.

*d* Ps. 18. 7. Ps. 114. Deut. 33. 2.

*e* ch. 3. 31.

the history: for so, for the moment, through mere incompetency to understand the attitude of the Jaels and Hebers, peace may be kept on the side of the Church's bitterest oppressors toward those who are deemed but harmless and unpractical visionaries, with no weapon of power beyond a tent-pin, which in the end, however, breaks the peace, as did Jael's.

3. And now we come to the song, which, from the mouth of the prophetess, gives us the divine judgment, the manifestation of the spiritual condition as seen of God, and of God Himself in the whole matter. Those who feel it needful to apologize for the sentiments which it expresses, as well as those who view it simply as an interesting fragment of antique poetry, a relic of rough and barbarous days, forget surely the prophetic character ascribed to Deborah, as also the large place given to this song of hers in so brief a record. The place given in an inspired writing is an exact measure of the importance attaching.

(i.) The song divides naturally into three parts, the first of which goes back to the beginning, to show the origin of the whole matter—a lesson, not for Israel alone, but for kings and counsellors amid the nations round, to ascribe glory to Jehovah even for the humbling of His people, as now for their deliverance.

(*a*) Certainly His power had been known when in the midst of Israel He came forth from Edom. Edom is specially noticed, because it was thence that the people emerged at the end of the wilderness career, to threaten the nations with their might—a might that was not their own: for the earth quaked, and the heavens dropped at the presence of Jehovah, Israel's God. Sinai, before this, had done so, where Israel had come into covenant with Him; and there the secret of their strength and the conditions of its continuance had been declared. Now, awakened afresh to the blessedness of obedience, they had devoted themselves to their Saviour-God; and He who had declared Himself as "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," had interfered and delivered them.

(*b*) They had been brought low because of their departure from Him. They had chosen new gods, and thus war was in their gates: the land was stripped and desolate, the inhabitants, pent up within the walls of their cities, dared not venture forth into the open country, and travelers went to their destination by unused and circuitous paths. Up to the very gates swept the tide of war, for Israel was defenceless and unarmed.

And this was in the days of Shamgar, the deliverer of the south, whose victory had not shamed others into faith. It was in the days of Jael, by whom, though

The [f]highways ceased to be,
And the travellers went by winding ways.
The villages ceased, they ceased in Israel,
Until that I, Deborah, arose;
Till I arose, a mother in Israel.
They chose [g]new gods; then war was at the gates:
Was there seen [h]shield or spear among forty thousand in Israel?
My heart is toward the [i]governors of Israel, that devoted themselves among the people:
Bless ye Jehovah.
Ye that ride on white she-asses,
Ye that sit on carpets,
Ye that walk by the way, sing!
Away from the sound of archers,
'Mid the places of [j]drawing water,
There they celebrate the righteous acts of Jehovah,
The righteous acts toward His villages in Israel:—
Then the people of Jehovah went down to the gates.
2. The tribes and the conflict. [2]Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake; utter a song!

[f] Lev. 26.22.
[g] Deut. 32. 17. Jer. 2. 11.
[h] 1 Sam. 13. 19-22. *cf.* Eph. 6. 11-17.
[i] *cf.* Heb. 13. 7, 17. *ctr.* Acts 3. 17.
[j] Ps. 44. 1, etc. *cf.* Jno. 14. 26.

but a woman, God had now once more delivered them. It lasted until Deborah herself rose up to be a mother to those who had forsaken their Father-God. How pitifully low had this great people fallen!

(c) With return of heart comes return of blessing. Bless Jehovah now, for peace is in the land. The spoil of their enemies is being divided where in quietness they draw water for refreshment, none making afraid. The people come down to the gates, and the open villages are once more everywhere; they celebrate once more the righteous acts of Jehovah, their covenant-God.

All this, while picturesquely told, is simplicity itself; and while here in an Israelitish garb, is subsequently what in the history of Christendom has been many times repeated. The cause of Israel's desolation is never far to seek, for the Lord their God is a sun and a shield, and with Him no power could prevail against them. We, too, while we may lose ourselves among various second causes if we undertake as philosophers to trace an evil condition to its origin, may reach, without any doubt, its first great cause, if we will but be honest and confess the truth before God. In Ephesus, the first of the seven churches, the Lord Himself puts before them (and before us) the root of all bad fruit that ever grew: "Thou hast left thy *first* love." Yet they had zeal, and works, and what not; but His word to them is only, "Repent." And, alas, Christendom will not repent: it abides under the doom, "I will come unto thee, and take away thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

There were partial returns, however, in Israel, in which God graciously met and encouraged, as He could, such a return. These are types for us, not, indeed, historically fulfilled, as in the churches of Revelation, but enfolding principles which illumine the history, and are of perpetual application all the way through. How striking is the picture here of such a state of things as the endless strife of sects induces! The highways ceasing, the peaceful travelers having to walk through devious ways; no possibility of dwelling anywhere save behind a wall of defence; the mass of true Israel left without weapons; and those who would draw water from the wells of salvation exposed to the attacks of the ready archers! Well might we celebrate deliverance from all this! But such deliverances have been but few and partial.

(ii.) We have now the conflict, and the various relation of the tribes to it: for Israel is no longer one. But a remnant of the noble come down to take part in

Arise, Barak! and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam!
Then came down a [k]remnant of nobles of the people; [k] *cf.* ch. 7. 7.
Jehovah came down [l]for me among the mighty. [l] *cf.* ver. 23.
Out of [m]Ephraim they whose root is in Amalek; [m] *cf.* ch. 1. 29, etc.
After thee [n]Benjamin, among thy peoples;
Out of [o]Machir came down governors, [n] *cf.* ch. 1. 21, etc.
And out of [p]Zebulon they that handle the pen of the scribe. [o] *cf.* Num. 32. 39, 40.
And the princes of [q]Issachar were with Deborah;
Yea, Issachar was the support of Barak: [p] *cf.* ch. 1. 30, etc.
[When] into the valley he was sent on foot.
In the divisions of Reuben were great [r]resolves of heart. [q] *cf.* Num. 1. 28, 29 with Num. 26. 25.
Why abodest thou among the [s]sheepfolds to hear the pipings to the flocks? [r] *cf.* Mat. 21. 30.
Among the divisions of Reuben were great deliberations of heart. [s] Num. 32. 1, etc. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10.
[t]Gilead abode beyond Jordan;
And [u]Dan, why did he remain in ships? [t] *cf.* Josh. 22. 19.
[v]Asher sat still by the sea-shore,
And abode by his creeks. [u] *cf.* ch. 1. 34–36.
[w]Zebulon is a people that jeoparded their lives unto death, [v] *cf.* ch. 1. 31, 32.
And [x]Naphtali on the high places of the field.
The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan [w] *cf.* ch. 1. 30. Acts 15. 26. Acts 20. 24.
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:
They took no gain of money. [x] *cf.* ch. 1. 33.
They fought from heaven:
The [y]stars from their courses fought against Sisera. [y] *cf.* Josh. 10. 11–14.
The stream Kishon swept them away,
A helpful stream was the stream Kishon.
My soul, thou hast trodden down strength!
Then stamped the horse-hoofs
With galloping, galloping of their mighty ones!
3. The divine oracle. [3z]Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of Jehovah: [z] *cf.* Mat. 12. 30.

the deliverance; and those that are noted here seem to include all that from first to last enter into the struggle: for in the first battle at Tabor only Zebulon and Naphtali follow Barak, and are thus specially distinguished in the song itself (verse 18). But many take no part at all. Reuben makes great resolutions, and then wavers. Gilead allows the intervention of Jordan to be sufficient excuse. Dan is otherwise occupied, and stays in his ships. Asher, without occupation, tarries at the sea-coast, All these varieties of indifference are easy to be understood. Among those that, sooner or later, do take part the distinction is not so easy; and for the present at least it must be left.

Next we have the actual conflict and overthrow of the enemy. Heaven and earth unite against the oppressors of the people of God. The stars from their courses fought against them above; the Kishon swept them away with its stream below. The mighty ones showed themselves such by the stamping of their frightened horses. Such is the strength of those that are with God: the mightier the foes, the mightier only is the overthrow.

(iii.) We have now, most suitably filling the third place, a directly announced

Curse with a curse the inhabitants thereof,
Because they came not to Jehovah's [a]help,— *a cf.* ver. 13. Mat. 25. 41 -45.
To Jehovah's help against the mighty!
[b]Blessed among women *b cf.* 2 Sam. 19. 32, 39.
Shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,
Blessed among women in the tent!
He asked for water, she gave milk,
In the nobles' bowl she brought forth cream.
She put her hand to the pin,
And her right hand to the workman's hammer;
And smote Sisera, struck through his head,
Shattered and pierced through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down;
At her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell, overcome.
Through the window she looketh, and crieth aloud,
The [c]mother of Sisera, through the lattice, *c* Ex. 15. 9.
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the steps of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answer her,
But she repeats her words unto herself:
Have they not found—divided the spoil?
A damsel or two apiece?
For Sisera booty of dyed stuffs,
Booty of dyed embroidered stuffs,
Dyed stuff doubly embroidered,
For his neck as a spoil?
So let [d]all thine enemies perish, Jehovah! *d* Ps. 83. 9, 10.

divine oracle. It is twofold—the one part in solemn contrast with the other. The curse upon Meroz—"[built] of cedars"—is an awful warning for those who in the day of needed help against the enemy withhold their help. As if to cut off the excuse so readily made for indifference, it is distinctly declared to be Jehovah who requires help: certainly not on His own account; that could hardly be supposed; but yet He looks for real and active sympathy and putting one's hand to work in what His heart is. The name of the city at least suggests the hindrances to this, of which the world is full—pride, luxury, all that makes the world look stable, and the things of God thus to be unreal because unseen—which refuses to accept His judgment. "Built of cedar" may well remind us how "Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria say in pride and in strength of heart, The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars." (Isa. ix. 9, 10.) Of such God says in Malachi, "They may build, but I will throw down."

In contrast with the curse upon Meroz, we have next the blessing upon Jael, in which the iron warrior is seen in utter collapse at the feet of a woman. Meroz had failed in the plain path of duty; but Jael, who might have been excused, forgets her womanhood and her alien birth, forgets the ordinary claims of hospitality and the pity accorded to distress, and strikes for the Lord and for His people. There are times when the voice of nature must not be listened to, as when Levi "knew not his own kindred." On the other side, the unwomanly woman's voice that follows with the anticipation of the victory that was not to be, and of the spoil that was never to be handled, shows the degradation of nature in a soul away from God, and the tyranny under which Israel lay prostrate. After all, in behalf of nature itself was Jael's blow struck: that which is for God is no less for the creature, because God Himself cannot but be, in all the reality

And let those that love him
Be as the sun goeth forth in its might.
And the land was quiet [e]forty years.

[e] ch. 3. 11.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. vi.–x. 5.)

*The Midianite Test: the Church in relation to the world.*

(VI.–VIII. 32.)

Gideon: The way of power.

1. (vi. 1-32.) The call of the man of might.

α (v. 1-10.) Rebellion and repentance.

1.[1α] AND the children of Israel did that which was [f]evil in Jehovah's eyes; and Jehovah gave them up into the hand of [g]Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed over Israel: from the face of Midian the children of Israel made themselves the [h]dens that are in the mountains, and the caves, and the fastnesses. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that Midian came up, and Amalek, and the children of the east, even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and [i]destroyed the produce of the land until thou come to Gaza, and they left no sus-

[f] ch. 4. 1.

[g] Num. 25. 16-18.

[h] 1Sam.13.6. 1Sam.22,1. Heb.11. 38.

[i] Lev. 26.16. *cf.* Hag. 2. 16, 17.

of what He is, for him whom He has made for Himself. The cause of God is the cause of all.

SUBD. 4.

The fourth subdivision gives us the Midianite oppression and the deliverance, with the failure of the deliverer himself, and its disastrous consequences, ending, however, in true and peaceful revival under Tola and Jair. The spiritual meaning, as we shall see, brings all this into a true unity. Israel sinks lower than ever before. Gideon also fails in the very hour of victory; and the reign of his son is a usurpation of Jehovah's rights, begun in fratricide and closed in Divine judgment. Even in this way, the numerical structure vindicates itself; but there is much more than this.

Midian, a son of Abraham by Keturah, is, as we have seen, in Gen. xxv., in common with his other children, the witness and pledge of how the nations of the earth will find blessing at last in him. It is a picture of blessing, where Ishmael, as another son, comes in also as representing Israel themselves in the same millennial day. The history, however, both of Ishmael and Midian (as man's history everywhere) speaks something very different from God's grace. These two also are connected—in some sense, identified—in Scripture (Gen. xxxvii. 28; chap. viii. 24), as we shall presently see. Midian in this way stands for the world, as its history has characterized it, and the name corresponds to this, meaning "strife." "The corruption that is in the world" is "through lust" (2 Pet. i. 4); and "whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members?" (Jas. iv. 1.) And especially do the lusts in the members war against Christ, and thus against the Church of Christ. These Midianites—"Midian" is supposed by some to have real connection with the modern word "Bedouin"—were Arab raiders, wandering pillagers, locust-like devouring what they had no will to produce, as the story here shows; and this is what the world is when admitted into the professing church: it has no community of interest in it, but the reverse; the effect is mere desolation. The Israelites were forced by the Midianites into dens and caves and fastnesses; and so, literally, have the true followers of the Lord in the times of the world-church, when rule was ravage merely, and when the "produce of the land"—the heavenly fruits of life, and the seed of the word from which they spring—were the special objects of the spoilers' pursuit.

Notice, too, the connection with the Philistines, whose name we have seen is "wanderers," and who are the type so near to this, of earthly men intruding into heavenly things. "Until thou come to Gaza" is no mere geographical

tenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle, and their tents, and they came up as grasshoppers for multitude: both they and their camels were without number; and they came into the land to destroy it. And Israel was brought [j] very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel [k] cried unto Jehovah. And it was so, when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah because of Midian, that Jehovah sent a [l] prophet unto the children of Israel, who said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel: I brought you up out of Egypt, and brought you forth from the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that were oppressing you, and I drove them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, I am Jehovah your God: fear not the gods of the Amorite, in whose land ye dwell; but ye have not hearkened to my voice.

[j] Ps. 107. 39.
[k] ch. 4. 3.
[l] ch. 2. 1.

[b] (v. 11-24.) The Deliverer.

And there came the [m] angel of Jehovah, and sat under the terebinth that was in Ophrah, that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. And his son Gideon was [n] beating out wheat in the wine-press, to hide it from Midian. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou [o] mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, Alas, my lord, if

[m] ch. 13. 3.
[n] cf. Prov. 2. 1-5.
[o] cf. Rom. 4. 20.

limit. "Gaza formerly, as in later times, was the great bazaar of stolen wares, brought together there by the Bedouins from their expeditions." (Cassel, in Lange's Commentary.) Philistines would naturally league with Israel's enemies, and typically are but another phase or aspect of the world-church. Other connections of the history here we shall find later in the story of Philistine-named Abimelech.

With the Midianites Amalekites also throng into the land. Familiar as we are with what Amalek stands for (see Exod. 17, *n*), we have no difficulty in seeing that here we are plainly reminded how the world and the lusts of the flesh are found together. The children of the East—a general term for nameless marauders—represent, probably, the similarly nameless host of evils that follow in the train of those already named. No wonder Israel was "brought very low"; but they are brought thus to cry to God, and He comes in for them. A prophet is sent to put them in remembrance of what is indeed so plain and yet so easily forgotten—the secret of their present condition to be in their false gods. With us all, such desolation from the Lord's hand means but this very thing, though it be in various ways disguised.

(*b*) Thus brought to repentance, the deliverer is now found for them. This deliverer is Gideon, the son of Joash, a Manassite; and it is simple enough, though none the less needful to be insisted on, that in Manasseh, the spiritual pressing on after the heavenly goal, is to be found the rescue from the spirit of the world. Gideon is the son of Joash the Abiezrite; and Joash may most simply mean "the despairing one," though taken generally, from the alternation of the two names in the case of two kings of the after-history, to be simply a contraction for Jehoash, a name of very different meaning. But even in their case, is it so sure that one name is but the contraction for the other? True reverence for the Word would assure us that even there there must be a reason for the difference, and therefore a corresponding difference of meaning. The change, one familiar with the style of Scripture would say, is a *paronomasia*, or slight change in the

Jehovah be with us, why is all this befallen us? and [p]where are all his wonders, which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath abandoned us, and hath given us up into the clutch of Midian. And Jehovah turned [his face] on him, and said, Go in [q]this thy strength, and thou shalt save Israel out of the clutch of Midian: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Ah, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my thousand is the poor one in Manasseh, and I am the [r]least in my

[p] Ps. 89. 49.
[q] *cf.* Mat. 17. 20.
[r] Jer. 1. 6. 1 Sam. 9. 2. *cf.* Lk. 5. 8–11. 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10.

name, given for the very purpose of conveying a different thought. Even here, though the double form does not occur, Joash, the "despairing"—meaning *self*-despair—might well become a Jehoash, whom "Jehovah supports." And this, indeed, seems conveyed here, only after another manner: for Joash is "the Abiezrite;" and Abiezer means, as commonly given, "father of help," or, more literally, "*my* father is help." Certain it is that the true Abiezrite, or he who is able to trust thus confidently in God as his support, will be one weaned from self-confidence—from the thought of self-help.

Gideon springs thus from Joash; and his name is almost identical with that of a Benjamite already interpreted (Num. i. 11), Gideoni, "the cutter down." The application made of it there is to the judgment of the flesh, which the more literal meaning, "*my* cutter down," may, indeed, more precisely indicate. This links Gideon and Joash in thought very closely together; but Gideon is more general: it is "the cutter down;" and if this imply in the first place the judgment of man as fallen, in the light of God, we can clearly understand that this is power over the world necessarily, and that Gideon is thus the proper name of the deliverer from the hand of Midian.

To Gideon the call is given in another manner from that to any former judge. To him the angel of Jehovah appears—one who everywhere accepts the title, with all that belongs to it, of Jehovah Himself. Gideon the Manassite is thus shown the goal toward which the Christian Manassite runs. It is in the Lord's presence alone that things take their true shape, and find their proper judgment. The angel appears sitting under the terebinth that was in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. *Elah*, whether terebinth or oak, which is disputed, means, literally, a strong tree; Ophrah is generally taken as meaning "vigorous, nimble," and so a "fawn"; but from another root may mean "crumbling," akin to *aphar*, "dust." The angel's position may be thus another intimation of how, out of human weakness, strength is developed and maintained.

This is what is clearly before us, all through Gideon's history. He is found beating out wheat in a wine-press, to keep it out of the hands of the Midianites, and the angel salutes him with the words, "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." And when he objects their present condition as proof that Jehovah had abandoned them, the angel further bids him, "Go in this thy strength, and thou shalt deliver Israel out of the clutch of Midian." What is this "strength"? It is the apprehension of the Lord's presence as this,—the consciousness that without Him there is none. This realized, the spiritual vision clears: God is seen as the soul's one necessity, and clung to, whatever else must be given up; there comes real strength to stand in the face of a hostile world, or against the opposition of the people of God themselves; and to stand with God means victory. Then the glorious face of God is turned upon us, as is said here with regard to Gideon; and every one so energized finds his call in this to aid in the deliverance of His people from the enemy: "Go, and thou shalt deliver; have not I sent thee?"

But it is easier to learn to answer to our name Jacob than it is to appropriate in simple faith that of Israel which God has given us; and so Gideon, mighty man of valor as he is yet to prove, shrinks from the place to which the voice of

father's house. And Jehovah said unto him, Nay, but [s]I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite Midian as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found favor in thine eyes, show me a [s]sign that it is thou who talkest with me: [t]depart not from hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will remain until thou return. And Gideon went and made ready a [v]kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out to him under the terebinth, and presented [it.] And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh, and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this [w]rock, and pour out the broth: and he did so. And the angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the [x]fire rose up out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of Jehovah departed out of his sight. And Gideon perceived that he was the angel of Jeho-

[s] Ex. 3. 12 with 1 Cor. 1. 26–29. 1 Cor. 2. 1–5.

[t] 2 Ki. 20. 8. Is. 7. 11–14. ver. 36, 37.

[u] ch. 13. 15, 16.

[v] *cf.* Lev. 4. 28.

[w] *cf.* Num. 16. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 4–8.

[x] *cf.* Lev. 9. 24. 1 Ki. 18. 38.

the Lord has called him, and opposes the very littleness which makes him a fit instrument in God's hand, as an argument against this! "Ah, Lord," he says, "wherewith shall *I* save Israel?" Why, with an ox-goad, as Shamgar once; or with a smooth stone from the brook, as David afterward. But it is not an inquiry merely as to the Lord's will, although now he owns it to be the Lord that is thus speaking with him. Alas, little "I" can be great enough as an obstacle to faith, and assert itself how pertinaciously in the very presence of the grace of God! And so he goes on to talk about his family, and his own place in his father's house. And how many are thus hindered from taking the place that God would give them by that littleness of theirs, which, after all, is of so much account! When shall we really learn that God's great men are all little ones, only made great by His use of them?—and leave off this shameful idolatry of means which is so continually putting the creature into the place of God, to its own dishonor and the wreck of all that we can wreck?

The Lord keeps to His grace, and Gideon must rise up to this: "Nay, but I will be with thee," He says; and there is all that need be said.

But Gideon's doubts are not settled: is it, after all, Jehovah that talks with him? Yes; is there not, after all, such a thing as fanaticism? Can we not make mistakes? And how, then, shall we be sure, at any time, we are not making one? Dull enough, surely, we are, when that voice which there is not another like, can be heard with doubt in the soul that hears it! May we not learn by the connection, too, that it is just the making so much of man that makes God so little, and disables us from distinguishing the voice of God? His thoughts are not as our thoughts; yet we may refuse His thoughts because they are so unlike our own. And often, indeed, we do this.

Gideon would prove, then, his visitor with an offering, and significantly brings him Abraham's offering of an ephah — that is, three measures — of flour; but Abraham's gift is of *fine* flour; and instead of Abraham's calf he brings a kid. Though less full a type than that in Genesis, Gideon's offering still speaks of Christ. And on the angel's part here there is more reserve than there, but still acceptance. At his direction it is placed upon the rock; and the angel touching it with his staff, it goes up in fire as an accepted offering. Then the angel himself departs: there is not power for sustained communion, as in Abraham's case; yet Christ, as Representative of His people, accepted in sacrifice upon the cross, is declared the ground upon which God can be with them in delivering

vah; and Gideon said, [y] Ah, Lord Jehovah! that I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face. And Jehovah said unto him: Peace to thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

[y] ch. 13. 20, 22. Is. 6. 5.

c (vv.25–32.) Worship restored.

(*c*) And Gideon built there an [z] altar to Jehovah, and called it Jehovah-shalom: it is yet this day in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. And it was on that night Jehovah said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and [a] throw down the altar of Baal which thy father hath; and cut down the Asherah that is by it; and build an altar unto Jehovah thy God on the top of this strong place in the ordered way, and take the second bullock, and offer it up as a burnt-offering with the wood of the Asherah which thou cuttest down. And Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as Jehovah spake unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's house and the men of the city, and could not do it by day, that he did it by [b] night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah that was beside it was cut down, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that had been built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and searched, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. And the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring forth thy son, that he may die, because he hath broken down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the Asherah that was beside it.

[z] Gen. 8. 20. Gen. 12. 7, 8. ch. 21. 4, etc.

[a] ch. 2. 2. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 19.

[b] *cf.* Matt. 2. 14. Jno. 3. 2.

them. And this is the true assurance of competence for the Gideons of any generation.

He is assured now that he has seen the angel of Jehovah face to face, yet fears on that account, till quieted by His word, that he will not die. There is, indeed, for us ever in the apprehension of the Lord's presence the apprehension also of the sentence passed upon the flesh; and here is the ability for all right walk, and energy for the warfare to which we are called. "Now mine eye seeth Thee, therefore I abhor myself." And Christ crucified is the affirming of this sentence and for deliverance from ourselves, that "crucified with Christ" we may yet live,—no longer we, but Christ living in us.

(*c*) Gideon, therefore, builds an altar, and calls it Jehovah-shalom,—"Jehovah is peace." It is not merely that there is peace *with* God, nor would this be the expression for it, for Jehovah is already the covenant name. No; but Jehovah *is* peace: it is found in Him; He has produced and bestowed it: from all fear whatever the soul takes shelter in Himself. And this being so, the altar itself is now a challenge of the idols; Jehovah's altar cannot abide in company with Baal's, nor Israel's deliverance be accomplished with a divided faith. Thus it was on the same night, the night of the day in which Jehovah had appeared, that Jehovah bade him throw down Baal's altar, and cut down the asherah,—a pillar of wood, the symbol of the Ashtaroth worship with which that of Baal was conjoined,—and, building an altar to Himself on the top of the stronghold (to which they were accustomed to retire from the face of the Midianites), to offer upon it his father's second bullock with the wood of the asherah he had cut down. Not to be interrupted by the unbelief of those around, he did it by night, and the next morning the challenge to Baal was apparent. Thus "to faith" Gideon had to

[c] And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will *ye* contend for Baal? or will *ye* save him? He that will contend for him, let him be put to death while it is yet morning: if he be God, let him contend for himself, because one hath broken down his altar. And he called him Jerub-baal that day, saying, Let Baal contend with him, because he hath broken down his altar.

c *cf.* 1 Sam. 10. 27 with 1 Sa. 11. 12.

2. (Ch. vi. 33 –vii. 15.) Steps toward deliverance.

a (vi. 33-35.) The gathering.

[2] (*a*) And all Midian and Amalek and the children of the east were gathered together: and they passed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. And the [d] Spirit of Jehovah endued Gideon, and he blew the [e] trumpet, and Abiezer was called out after him; and he sent [f] messengers through all Manasseh, who also were called out after him; and he sent messengers into Asher, and into Zebulon and into Naphtali; and they advanced to meet them.

d ch. 3. 10. ch. 11. 29. ch. 13. 25, etc.

e ch. 3. 27. 1 Sam. 13. 3, etc.

f. ch. 4. 10.

b (vi. 36–40.) Signs for the refreshment of faith.

(*b*) And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold, I put a [g] fleece of wool upon the threshing-floor: if dew be on the fleece alone, and it be dry on all the ground, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl-full of water. And Gideon

g *cf.* ver. 17. ch. 7. 10,11. Acts 17. 31 with 1 Cor. 15. 20, 58.

"add virtue,"—the boldness needed by every good soldier of Christ; and this boldness is God's means to awaken and embolden others, so that Joash, his father, steps into the ranks. To the cry for his son to be put to death, he answers that the pleader for Baal deserves that: it is for Baal himself to avenge the insult,—a sarcasm which smites down at once the opposition, and leaves to Gideon the title of idol-challenger, "Let Baal contend!" In the strife that is beginning, the very existence of the man of faith is a sign of victory already achieved, a pledge of one to come.

(ii.) The enemy now appears, and we are called to see, in the present section, the steps toward deliverance. There has to be preparation on Israel's part, as is evident; and the separation of those whom God can use in the accomplishment of this. Gracious He is, but none the less careful as to the associations of those who are His instruments, to whom He intrusts the honor of His name.

(*a*) The Midianites and their confederates spread themselves in the valley of Jezreel. We have already seen who these are, and for what they stand in the divine vocabulary. The Spirit of Jehovah now endues Gideon; for no mere wisdom or might of man is sufficient in this contest, and only in dependence are we safe. He blows the trumpet, and first Abiezer, and then all Manasseh, are gathered after him. The fitness of Manasseh for this place is apparent in Gideon, himself a Manassite. The world can only be overcome by him whose goal is beyond it; and this we have abundantly seen is what Manasseh represents. Asher, the "happy," Zebulon, the "dweller in relationship," and Naphtali, the "struggler" who overcomes, follow after Manasseh, and the Israelites' army of victory is gathered.

(*b*) But Gideon is not yet fully prepared, and urges upon the Lord his desire for a sign. He puts a fleece of wool upon the threshing-floor, and finds it in the morning wet with dew when all the ground is dry around. And again, at his further request, these conditions are reversed, and while all the ground is wet with dew, the fleece is dry. The fleece of the shorn sheep is the figure of forlorn Israel, which is to be filled with the dew of God's blessing amid the drought

said unto God, [h]Let not thine anger kindle against me and I will speak but this once. Let me [i]prove, I pray thee, this once with the fleece: let it now be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece alone, and on all the ground there was dew.

c (vii. 1–8.) The consecration needed.

(c) And Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people with him, rose up early, and encamped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Midian was north of him, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are [j]too many for me to give Midian into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, [k]My hand hath saved me. Now therefore, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whoever is [l]fearful and afraid, let him turn away again from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty-two thousand; and there remained [m]ten thousand. And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are [n]still many: bring them down to the water, and [o]I will try them for thee there; and it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, This man shall go with thee, he shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This man shall not go with thee, he shall not go. So he brought the people down to the water; and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that [p]lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth on his knees to drink. And the number of those that lapped, with their hand to their mouth, was

h Gen. 18. 32.

i *cf.* Mal. 3. 10.

j ver. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 27–30.

k Deut. 8. 17. Dan. 4. 30, 31.

l Deut. 20. 8. 1 Cor. 16. 13, 14.

m ch. 4. 6.

n ver. 2.

o *cf.* 1 Sam. 16. 6, 7.

p *ctr.* 1 Sam. 14. 24–30. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29–31 with 2 Tim. 4. 10.

upon the heathen around. But then this also may be of God, the while His mercies are refreshing the nations around, Israel for her sins may be left dry. This is, in either case, no mere natural occurrence: it is in His favor that there is life; He hideth His face, and we are troubled. To recognize His hand in all conditions, however opposite,—to own everywhere His power and sway: this is the secret of wisdom, and of strength no less. For the acts of His throne are not arbitrary. He is no mere personal fate, but righteous and holy in all His dealings, and desiring to be understood by His people, however men in their wanderings from Him may misconceive the One upon whom they have turned their back.

(c) With his faith refreshed, Jerubbaal, the challenger of the idols, who is thus Gideon, the "cutter-down," rises up early, with all the people with him, and encamps opposite the enemy by the spring of trembling (Harod). And there, right in the presence of the vast host of Midian he is made by God to dismiss more than two thirds of his small army (at its best not a fourth part of the number of their adversaries), and that in obedience to a law of Deuteronomy. And what a humiliation and distress that 22,000 Israelites, come out expressly to battle, should on the plea of *fear* turn their backs upon their leader and his diminished force! But the design was not merely to get rid of the faint-hearted: for God's hand to be manifest as He meant it to be, ten thousand men were still too many. At the word of the Lord they are brought down to the water, and tested there by their manner of drinking. Three hundred, instead of bowing down on their knees for a leisurely draught, merely, as in haste, lap the water from their hand. They are true Manassites, pressing on to what is before them; and "by the three hundred men that lapped will I save you," is the Lord's

three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the [q]three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and give Midian into thy hand; and let all the people go, every man to his place. And they took [r]victuals [for] the people in their hand, and their [s]trumpets; but he sent all Israel, every man to his tent, and retained the three hundred men.

*d* (vii. 8-15.) An experience among the host.

(*d*) And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. And it was so in that night that Jehovah said unto him, Arise, go down to the camp: for I [t]have given it into thy hand. But if thou fearest to go down, go down thyself and Phurah thy servant unto the camp, and hear what [u]they say; and after that thy hands shall be strengthened to go down to the camp. And he went down with Phurah his servant to the outside of the armed men that were in the camp. Now Midian and Amalek and all the children of the east lay along in the valley, like [v]locusts for multitude, and their camels were numberless, as the sand that is on the sea-shore for multitude. And when Gideon came, behold, a man telling his comrade a dream. And he said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream, and lo, a round cake of [w]barley-bread rolled into the camp of Midian, and came to the tent, and smote it so that it fell, and turned it upside down, and the tent lay along. And his comrade answered and said, This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand hath God given Midian and all the camp. And so it was, when Gideon heard the tale of the dream and the interpretation thereof, that he [x]worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, Rise up, for Jehovah hath given into your hand the camp of Midian.

3. (Ch. vii. 16–viii. 21.) Victory realized.

*a* (vii. 16-23.) The power in weakness: "that the excellency of the power may be of God."

[3](*a*) And he divided the three hundred men into three

*q* 1 Sam. 14. 6.

*r* ver. 5. 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4.

*s* ch. 6. 34. Neh. 4. 18.

*t* 2 Sam. 5. 19.

*u* Josh. 2. 9, 24.

*v* ch. 6. 5. Ps. 118. 12. Jer. 46. 23.

*w* Num. 5. 15. *cf.* Jno. 6. 9.

*x* Ex. 4. 29-31. Josh. 5. 13-15.

word to Gideon; "and let all the people go, every man to his place." They do not seem to be sent home, however, but to their tents, as not needed for the battle that was before them.

(*d*) The Lord recognizes, however, the strain of all this upon Gideon's faith, and Himself tenderly proposes now a means of encouragement. This the enemy themselves were to furnish. Going down with Phurah, his servant, to the outskirts of the camp, he arrives just in time to hear one of the men interpret to his comrade a dream. The dreamer had seen a round cake of common barley-bread roll against the tent and overthrow it; and his comrade interprets it of "the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel, into whose hand God has given Midian and all the camp." "Bread" and a "sword" seem most incongruous figures; and yet they are both figures of the word of God; and *barley* bread—bread of the poorest kind—may in this case either speak of it according to the estimation of its despisers, or more probably of even its simplest and lowest truths. For what more than these are needed as against Midian and Amalek; that is, the world and the lusts of the flesh, as here making inroad into the Church of God?

(iii.) (*a*) And now we come to realized deliverance, in which the hand of the Lord is most manifestly seen. The means of victory are so clearly inter-

companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, and [y]empty pitchers, and [z]torches within the pitchers. And he said unto them, [a]Look on me, and do likewise; and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that as I do, so shall ye do: when I [b]blow with the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpet also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon! And Gideon came, and the hundred men that were with him, to the extremity of the camp, in the beginning of the [c]middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch; and they blew the trumpets, and [d]brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and [e]held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow with; and they cried, Jehovah's sword and Gideon's! And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shout-

*y cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 20, 21.

*z cf.* Matt. 5. 14, 15.

*a cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 1. Phil. 4. 9.

*b* ch. 6. 34. Ezek. 33. 3. Zech. 9. 14. 1 Cor. 14. 8.

*c* 1 Th. 5. 3.

*d cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 6–12. 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.

*e cf.* Phil. 2. 15.

preted for us by the apostle (2 Cor. iv. 4–12) that it is hardly possible to go astray, while it is true, and nowise strange, that the type is transcended by the antitype. The light, the earthen vessel, and the shining forth of the light, are sufficient points of resemblance; and while in the New Testament these are not looked at in connection with the discomfiture of the Church's enemies, but in the building up of the Church itself, these things are not so far apart as to prevent very easy and, indeed, instructive comparison and connection with one another. To build up the Church aright is impossible without freeing it from the domination of the world: how could Israel be built up in the midst of Midianite devastation? Nor will the Church, if not built up, be long free from a foreign yoke. The demonic rulers of this world rule it by darkness (Eph. vi. 12). The inheritance of the saints is in light (Col. i. 12), and their armor also is "the armor of light" (Rom. xiii. 12). But that armor is not a mere wholly outside thing: it is light that is in the face of Christ Jesus,—*objective* there, indeed, but which is received into the believer's heart, and received not simply for personal joy and blessing, but "for shining forth" (2 Cor. iv. 6, *Gk*). "The glory of God that is in the face of Jesus Christ," has nothing to express it in the type here: we could scarcely expect it; but there is no other light for the Christian: there would not be even torchlight without this.

That the light is in an "earthen vessel" is abundantly plain. This treasure is enshrined in mere humanity with its manifest infirmity, liable to suffering and to death. But this, too, has its design, says the apostle: it is "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man." This is in the very line of truth that the story of the Lord's man of might enforces here. And yet the vessel, like the pitchers of the three hundred, tends indeed to shroud and bury the light so as to prevent its shining. What is needed, then, that the purpose of God may be fulfilled in this way? How plainly we see the spiritual requirement ruling here, for the vessel to be *broken* that the light may shine! And so the apostle dwells upon the afflictions of the Christian, "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body; for we who live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Thus it is light shining forth in life that is spoken of here; and this life not that of nature merely, but Christ our life, which, the more the outward man is consumed, becomes the more lustrous, the more convincingly of God.

When the world has invaded the Church, and Israel is scattered in dens and caves, this light may be little seen. Its display will always be the confusion of

ed; and they [f]fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and [g]Jehovah set every man's sword against his comrade, and against all the host; and the host fled as far as Beth-shittah, toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. And the men of Israel were [h]called together out of Naphtali and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after Midian.

(*b*) (vii. 24–viii. 9.) Internal strife.

(*b*) And Gideon sent messengers through all the hill-country of [i]Ephraim, saying, Come down against Midian, and take before them the waters as far as Bethbarah and Jordan. So all the men of Ephraim were called together, and took the waters as far as Bethbarah and Jordan. And they took two [j]princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb; and they pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon beyond Jordan.

And the men of Ephraim said unto him, [k]What is this that thou hast done to us, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with Midian? And they contended with him vehemently. And he said unto them, What have I done now in [l]comparison with you? Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? Into your hands hath God given the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what could I do in comparison with you? Then their excitement against him abated when he said that. And Gideon came to Jordan, [and] passed over, he and the three hundred that were with him, [m]faint, yet pursuing. And he said unto the men of Succoth, [n]Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me: for they are faint; and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said,

[f] 2 Kl. 7.6,7. Is. 9. 4. Heb. 11. 32–34.

[g] 1 Sam. 14. 20. 2 Chr. 20. 23.

[h] *cf.* ch. 5.14–18. 1 Sam. 14. 20–23. 1 Sam. 17. 52.

[i] ch. 3.27,28. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 21, etc.

[j] Ps. 83. 11, 12. Is. 9. 4. Is. 10. 26.

[k] *cf.* ch. 12. 1. 2 Sam. 19. 40–43. 1 Ki. 12. 16. *ctr.* Is. 11. 13, 14. Ezek. 37.15–22.

[l] *cf.* Prov. 15. 1 with Phil. 2. 3, 4. *ctr.* ch. 12. 1–6. with Gal. 5. 15.

[m] *ctr.* Gen. 25. 29. *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 10. 2 Sam. 21. 15. Is. 40. 31.

[n] 1 Sam. 21. 3, 4. *ctr.* Josh. 2. 1–7.

Midian and its overthrow, accomplished as it must and will be by the voice of the trumpet, once so effective in the destruction of Jericho. The light *and* the trumpet — the testimony of the Word and the testimony of the life — this is the *double* testimony which is true, and so effective, and which is the destruction of the world-church. Face to face with it, the mere godless profession, self-condemned, dies by its own hand.

(*b*) Hardly is victory achieved, and the fruits of it remain yet largely to be gathered, when opposition shows itself on the part of Israel themselves. Ephraim is now called to take part in the contest, and they respond and gain a decisive battle, taking two princes of Midian—Oreb and Zeeb, the "Raven" and the "Wolf,"—and bringing their heads to Gideon, on the other side of Jordan. There is, indeed, a place for Ephraim in such a contest as this, though it is not the first place. The spiritual meaning again illumines the history; and the names of the princes slain would seem to show them to represent only the ruder and lower of Israel's—or the Church's—enemies; indeed, according to the plain word, "princes," and not "kings."

But Ephraim is notorious also for pride, and it is that very first place that they fain would have. They contend vehemently with their deliverer, because they were not called when he went to fight Midian, and are only appeased by

[o] Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thine army? And Gideon said, Therefore, when Jehovah hath given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then will I thresh your flesh with thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

o *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 10–13.

And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake in like manner unto them; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, [p] When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

p *cf.* ch. 21. 8–10.

(c) (viii. 10–21.) Full deliverance.

(*c*) Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their host with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east, for there had fallen one hundred and twenty thousand men that drew the sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents, on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was [q] secure. And Zebah and Zalmunna fled; but he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host. And Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle, from the ascent of Heres. And he caught a youth of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him; and he wrote down for him the princes of Succoth and the elders thereof, seventy seven men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna about whom ye taunted me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are faint? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he [r] brake down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city. And he said unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What sort of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, Such as thou art they were: they each resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren—my mother's sons: as Jehovah liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up; slay them! But the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth.

q ch. 18. 10–27.

r ver. 9. *cf.* Lk. 19. 14, 27.

Gideon's unpretending humility, who refers all to God, if in his eyes, in fact, Ephraim's gleanings seem more than Abiezer's vintage.

Thence he goes on to meet scornful refusal of even necessary food for his famishing company from the Israelite towns of Succoth and Penuel. But he does not pause for the retribution with which he threatens them: "faint though pursuing," they press on.

(*c*) Of the completion of the deliverance from Midian little can be yet said. Much depends here upon the names, the meaning of some of which is hard to determine. Zebah means "sacrifice"; Zalmunna apparently "shadow [shelter?] withheld." Karkor, from a root "to dig," expresses "deep, soft, level

4. (viii. 22–32.) Gideon's failure and after-life.

Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall on us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna; and he [s]took away the moons that were on their camels' necks.

[t]And the men of Israel said unto Gideon, [t]Rule thou over us, thyself, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast saved us out of the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you. And Gideon said unto them, I would make a [u]request of you, that ye would every one give me the rings of his spoil. (For they had golden rings, because they were Ishmaelites.) And they said, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and cast on it every one the rings of his spoil. And the weight of the golden rings that he had requested was a thousand and seven hundred [shekels] of gold, beside the moons and ear-rings, and the purple garments that were on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were upon their camels' necks. And Gideon made them into an ephod, and

s *cf.* Gen. 31. 19. ver. 24–26.

t *ctr.* ch. 11. 6–11.

1 Sam. 8. 4–8. *cf.* Is. 33. 22.

u *ctr.* Num. 31. 48–54.

ground" (Fausset)—generally is given as "deep ground;" Jogbehah, "elevation," or, "it is exalted;" Nobah, "barking." The scoffers of Succoth and Penuel meet their threatened judgment after Midian.

(iv.) Gideon's career, so bright and prosperous hitherto, ends yet, alas, in sudden and disastrous failure. What worm has been at the root of all this beauteous development, that collapse should be so immediate upon success? There must surely be in it deep lessons of utter self-distrust, that we are called to learn, lessons that so to learn would save us from how much, perhaps, of painful experience, much like that of the elders of Succoth, taught as with the thorns and briars of the wilderness, the fruit of the curse which has come through sin.

One test, and that a severe one, Gideon successfully resists. The people bid him rule over them, and would establish royalty in his family among them; but he declines so promptly as effectually to prevent any repetition of the offer: "I will not rule over you," he says, "neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you." There it is plain he speaks out of the depth of strong conviction and loving obedience. And though God Himself had spoken permissively of a king for Israel some time in the future, Gideon had known too much of his own weakness, too much of the people with whom he had to do, and too well the Lord's abundant care and interest in Israel, to entertain for a moment the thought of anticipating this.

Yet in the same breath, it would seem, in which he rejects the kingship, he stretches forth his hand to take the priesthood: for nothing short of this can be meant by the use to which he puts the gifts which he now solicits from them, being the rings of the spoil. They had, it is added, golden rings, because they were Ishmaelites. The identification of these with the Midianites has been before noticed: they were Ishmaelites as men of strife, according to their name; not by descent, of course, but by habit. As warlike nomads it was natural for them to carry much of their wealth upon their persons. The use of all this gold shows clearly that it is a high priestly ephod that Gideon makes, not as intending to dispute the office with the high priest at Shiloh; and yet apparently claiming equal rank with his.

But what could lead a man like Gideon into such a course? That view is surely correct which finds this in a false interpretation of his past experience. He had actually offered sacrifice, as we remember, at Ophrah by the Lord's command; and there the altar he had raised still stood. It is simple that for

put it in his city Ophrah; and all Israel went thither [v] whoring after it, and it became a snare to Gideon, and to his house.

So Midian was humbled before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their head [w] no more: and the land was quiet [x] forty years in the days of Gideon. And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. And Gideon had seventy sons who came out of his loins, for he had [y] many wives. And his concubine, who was in Shechem, she also bare him a son,

[v] ch. 2. 3. cf. Num. 16 1-10.

[w] Num. 25. 16-18. Num. 31. 1-12.

[x] ch. 5. 31. ch. 10. 2.

[y] cf. Deut. 17. 17. 1 Ki. 11. 1-8.

this he was providing according to the Mosaic ritual, God having, as he might judge, already ordained him to this office: a plausible, and yet false, inference from a real experience. We need not wonder to hear that this became a snare to Gideon and his house, nor that all Israel went whoring after it. We can find in it what the generations of an after-dispensation have but too faithfully repeated, and thus types written for our admonition.

God had appointed but one high priest for Israel, and the ordinary priesthood was confined to the same line, the family of Aaron. The essence of this priesthood was that they were mediators for the people, and, by sacrifice, a special, peculiar link between the people and God: in this way alone could they draw near to God.

For us as Christians all this is changed. In Christianity people and priests are one, and on this account the *special* priesthood has passed away. We are no longer at a distance, but brought nigh: the effectual sacrifice has been offered once for all—as on the day of atonement, by the High Priest alone, who has thereupon, as for a moment Israel's high priest did, gone into the sanctuary, but a heavenly one, there to make intercession for us in the presence of God. The rent veil, the throned High Priest, the universal priesthood of the people of God, are essential characteristics of the period in which, through grace, we live.

But the Church has failed, and not proved able to retain for herself the apprehension of this grace. Mingled with and sunk into the world, the shadows of the past have been allowed to darken the light into which the goodness of God had introduced her. Distance has again come in between the people of God and God, the knowledge of the efficacy of the work of Christ has become obscured, and as a result the Jewish system, in the disguise of Christian names and forms, is found to-day firmly entrenched in the midst of Christendom. The old priesthood of a distinctive class, modified in various ways, is fully reinstated, and even exaggerated in the Romish and kindred ritualistic systems: an invasion of Christ's office in the direction of what Gideon's failure seems to point to typically in no uncertain way.

He had, indeed, been commanded to build an altar to Jehovah, and even to offer sacrifice upon it: and this was really putting him in a priestly place. But his sacrifice does not seem to have the mediatorial character which attached to the Aaronic priesthood, but to be rather eucharistic, or intended to vindicate the Lord's claim to the worship of Israel in opposition to Baal, whose altar had just been overthrown. Gideon's sacrifice, therefore, though in form such as that offered by the Aaronic priesthood, seems really different, and to approach in intent more truly to the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" of the Christian man. But the ephod—clearly high-priestly—speaks far otherwise; the high-priest being manifestly the representative of the nation before God; and Israel going whoring after it, intimates how they understood it. Its being made with the spoils of victory—of which it would remain a perpetual trophy—may show how in Christendom, as faith lessened and grew rare, the very piety of individuals tended to put them into a place which, from being foremost, came to be official and representative. The ordinary Christians became the secular, the laity, dropped back into the old distance, needing a continually greater work to

and he called his name [z]Abimelech. And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

[z] ch.9.1, etc.

(VIII. 33-IX.)

Abimelech, the false succession.

2. [1]And it came to pass, when Gideon was [a]dead, that the children of Israel returned and went whoring after the Baals, and set up Baal-berith as their god. And the children of Israel did not [b]remember Jehovah their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies round about, nor did they show [c]kindness to the house of Jerubbaal-Gideon, according to all the good that he had done to Israel.

1. (viii. 33-ix. 21.) Origin of his power.

[a] ch.4.1, etc. *cf.* Hos.6.4. Gal. 1. 6.

[b] Ps. 78. 11. Ps. 106. 13. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4, 5.

[c] ch.9.16-19.

And [d]Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brethren, and spake unto them and to all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak now in the ears of all the lords of Shechem, Which is better for you, that seventy persons, all sons of Jerubbaal, rule over you, or that one man rule over you? and remember that I am your [e]bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake for him all these things in the ears of all the lords of Shechem; and their heart inclined after Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of [f]Baal-berith; and Abimelech hired with them [g]worthless and reckless persons, and they followed him. And he went to his father's

[d] ch. 8. 31. *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 1.

[e] *ctr.* 2 Sam. 5. 1.

[f] ch. 8. 33. ver. 46.

[g] ch. 11. 3. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 22. 2.

bring them nigh, until an official priesthood intruded upon the work of Christ without rebuke, and the process of Judaizing became as complete as may be seen in Romanism.

We need not wonder, then, to find this a snare to Gideon and his house, nor soon an Abimelech proceeding from the loins of Jerubbaal, the deliverer. This we are now called to consider.

2. Abimelech ("my father [was] king"), in his name, carries us back to the Philistines. It was that of their kings, and speaks, as we saw in Genesis, of that successional claim in the world-church, the falsehood of which he so plainly represents. His succession is from one who refused power when offered him, and he makes it good by treachery and murder of those who stood in his way. His typical connection with his father's ephod is easy to be seen, and confirms the application of the whole history here.

Israel had once again lapsed into idolatry, and taken Baal-berith to be their god. The words mean "lord of the covenant," which may be simply equivalent to "covenant-lord," and may go beyond this. The worship of Baal was at least a sign of covenant with the Canaanites, whose god he was, and the history here gives manifest proof of alliance with the heathen. The "men of Hamor, the father of Shechem," are known and in estimation among them (ix. 28); and the word for "lords" (*baale*), unusual in Hebrew, is "often found in the Phœnician dialect." It is applied, says Fausset, "to the men of Gibeah (ch. xx. 5), and the Canaanite citizens of Jericho (Josh. xxiv. 11), and to the men of Keilah (1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12). The continual recurrence of this word (ver. 2, 6, 7, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 39, 46, 47, 51) can hardly be accidental; it probably alludes to the majority of them being Canaanites, and connects with the Phœnician Baal-worship of Canaan"—Baalites, as it were. In this way, also, the name Jerubbaal is so often harped upon. Baal-worship and intermixture with the Canaan-

house at Ophrah, and [h]slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone; but there remained Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, for he [i]hid himself.

And all the lords of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech [j]king, at the oak of the monument that is at Shechem. And they told Jotham; and he went and stood upon the top of Mount [k]Gerizim, and lifted up his voice and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye lords of Shechem, and God shall hearken unto you. The trees once went to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive, Reign over us. And the olive said unto them, Shall I leave my [l]fatness, wherewith by me they [m]honor God and men, and go to wave over the trees? And the trees said unto the [n]fig-tree, Come thou: reign over us. And the fig-tree said unto them, Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees? And the trees said unto the [o]vine, Come thou: reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Shall I leave my new wine, which [p]cheereth God and men, and go to wave over the trees? And all the trees said unto the [q]thorn-bush, Come thou: reign over us. And the thorn-bush said unto the trees, If in truth ye are anointing me king over you, come and take shelter in my shadow; but if not, let fire come out of the thorn-bush, and [r]devour the cedars of Lebanon.

[h] *cf.* Gen. 4. 8–10.
[i] 2 Ki. 11. 1–3.
[j] 1 Sam. 8.5. Hos. 13. 10, 11. *ctr.* ch. 8. 22, 23.
[k] Deut. 27. 12.
[l] Ps. 104. 15.
[m] *cf.* Ex. 30. 23–33 with Acts 10. 38. 1 Jno. 2. 2. 7.
[n] *cf.* Matt. 21. 19.
[o] *cf.* Is. 5. 1–6 with Jno. 15. 1–8.
[p] *cf.* Lk. 22. 17–20. 1 Cor. 11. 25.
[q] *cf.* Heb. 6. 8. Gal. 5. 13. 1 Jno. 3. 18. Lk. 22. 27. Phil. 2. 3–11.
[r] *cf.* Gal. 5. 14, 15. Ezek. 34. 1–6.

ites are certainly found at their worst in the story of crime and bloodshed following here.

Idolatry and the reign of Abimelech are thus connected, as in the dispensational fulfillment; and Shechem, at the very spot where the law of Jehovah was proclaimed, is now the center of apostasy.

(i.) The sources of his power are plainly that he is half Canaanite, half Israelite, son of Gideon on the one side, though son of the bondwoman on the other. He is, in this respect, another Ishmael; and with the same typical meaning that the apostle (Gal. iv.) gives to the former one. How plainly we have in him, then, the Jewish-Christian-Pagan abomination that has arisen in the bosom of Christianity to lord it over the Israel of God. Naturally his way must be prepared by the extermination of Jerubbaal's true successors, although a remnant escapes into hiding at Beer, the "well,"—a good place for God's refugees,—in the person of Jotham, who yet is able to make heard his testimony against the usurper.

Jotham ("Jehovah is perfect") bears in his name the character of a true witness. The Shechemites, with shameless audacity, gather at the stone set up by Joshua, to make the fratricide Abimelech king; and there Jotham appeals to them from Gerizim in the fable of the trees.

The tendency of man's heart is to make another king than God, to put leaders in His place, and thus to destroy the use and blessing for which the olive, the fig, the vine, the various gifts of God, are given. But just those who are really worthiest will most surely refuse to leave their spheres of happy service, their sweetness, and their fruit, to go to "wave over,"—to flutter idly in the wind over the trees. Thus royalty comes naturally to the thorn-bush, which need give up nothing, but which has thus nothing in its gift but thorns,—such as, indeed, the men of Succoth were taught with. But worse would come than

And now if ye have acted in truth and integrity in making Abimelech king, and have done well toward [s] Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him according to the desert of his hands—for my father fought for you, and disregarded his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; but ye are risen up this day against my father's house, and have slain his sons, seventy men, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech the son of his handmaid king over the lords of Shechem, because he is your brother—if you have acted in truth and integrity toward Jerubbaal and his house to-day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, then let [t] fire come out of Abimelech and devour the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo; and let fire come out of the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo, and [u] devour Abimelech. And Jotham ran away and fled, and went to [v] Beer and dwelt there, away from Abimelech his brother.

[s] *cf.* ch. 6.31, 32. ch. 7. 1, etc.

[t] ver. 24, 56.

[u] ver. 57.

[v] *cf.* Gen. 16. 7.

2. (ix. 22–57.) Strife and destruction of Shechem and Abimelech.

[2] And Abimelech had power over Israel three years; then God sent an [w] evil spirit between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem, and the lords of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: that the violence [done] to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be brought upon Abimelech their brother, who slew them, and upon the lords of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brethren. And the lords of Shechem set liers in wait for him on the tops of the mountains; and they [x] robbed all who came along by them in the way: and it was told Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed came, and his brethren, and they passed over into Shechem, and the lords of Shechem put confidence in him. And they went out into the field, and gathered of their vineyards, and trod it, and made festival, and went to the house of their god, and ate, and drank, and [y] cursed Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech? and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? Serve the men of

[w] *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 15.

[x] *cf.* ch. 5. 6.

[y] *cf.* Ps. 109. 17. Ps. 7. 16.

this,—the fire of God's wrath, which, from this side and from that, would destroy both king and people.

(ii.) The Jothams are seldom listened to; and the men of Shechem and Abimelech go on to the end of which they have been warned. Three years pass, and the prediction is fulfilled: the people of Shechem act treacherously toward Abimelech, and Abimelech wars against and destroys Shechem. This is all described with a fullness of detail which shows that there is much more in it than the concerns of a petty Israelitish city; yet as little more than this do the commentators treat it. Nor can we expect that full light upon it all should be acquired at once. But taking Abimelech as depicting in brief the growth and catastrophe of Romish power in Christendom, we may perhaps see in Gaal, the son of Ebed, the "loathing" bred of "servitude," which is but indeed the translation of his name, and which incites the nations to cast off their allegiance to him whom they first lifted into power. Well may the descendants of the "wild ass" (Hamor) rebel against so harsh a yoke as they had put their necks into! But it is another matter to

Hamor—the father of Shechem! and on what account should *we* serve him? and [z] would that this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech! And he said unto Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come forth!

[z] 2 Sa. 15. 4.

And Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, and his anger was kindled; and he sent messengers craftily to Abimelech, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren are come into Shechem, and lo, they urge the city against thee. And now rise up by night, thou and the people that are with thee, and [a] lie in wait in the fields; and it shall be that in the morning, when the sun is up, thou shalt rise early and set upon the city; and behold, when he and his people that are with him come out of the city, thou shalt do to him as thy hand shall find. And Abimelech and all the people that were with him rose up by night, and lay in wait by Shechem in four companies. And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city; and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from their ambush. And Gaal saw the people, and said unto Zebul, Behold, there are people coming down from the tops of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadows of the mountains as if they were men. And Gaal spake again and said, Behold, people are coming down from the highest point of the land, and a company are come by the way of the magicians' oak. And Zebul said unto him, Where is now thy mouth with which thou saidst, [b] Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Is not this the people thou hast despised? Go out, I pray thee, now, and fight with them. And Gaal went out before the lords of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. And Abimelech [c] chased him, and he fled before him; and there fell many wounded up to the entrance of the gate. And Abimelech remained at Arumah; and Zebul drave out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not stay in Shechem. And it came to pass on the morrow that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech. And he took the people, and divided them into [d] three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and behold, there were the

[a] *cf.* ch. 6. 27.

[b] ver. 28.

[c] Ps. 10. 2.

[d] *cf.* ch. 7. 16.

escape from it; and Zebul (which looks like Zebulon, but *a little clipped*), whose character throughout is that of craft, and who is Abimelech's officer to retain the city in obedience, may easily represent the apparent sanctity wherewith a power like that of Rome so well knows how to enforce its claims. Look but a little closer, and the ambiguity begins to appear. Zebul is nearly allied to Jezebel, still more evidently to Beelzebul,*— being identical, indeed, with the last part of this name, and thus may be really "*dung*," as it is there.

* The true reading, as is well known, of Matt. x. 25. Notice that Jezebel has also this sinister ambiguity: it may mean "chaste," her pretension, or "dung-heap," the reality. And this, too, is a symbol of Romanism!

people coming out of the city; and he rose up upon them and smote them. And Abimelech and the companies that were with him rushed on, and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city, and the two companies rushed upon all that were in the field, and smote them. And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that were in it, and brake down the city, and [e]sowed it with salt.

[e] *cf.* Jer. 17. 6.

And when all the lords of the tower of Shechem heard it, they entered the stronghold of the house of [f]El-berith. And it was told Abimelech that all the lords of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. And Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him. And Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut a bough from the trees, and took it up, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste and do likewise. And all the people likewise cut off every man his bough, and followed Abimelech; and they put them to the [g]hold, and set the hold on fire upon them: and all the men of the tower of Shechem died also — about a thousand men and women.

[f] ch. 8. 33.

[g] *cf.* 2 Ki. 10. 24, ver. 20.

And Abimelech went to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. And there was a strong tower in the midst of the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all the lords of the city, and shut it behind them, and went up upon the roof of the tower. And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and approached as far as the entrance of the tower, to burn it with fire. And a certain [h]woman cast an upper millstone upon Abimelech's head, and crushed his skull. And he called hastily unto the young man his [i]armor-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they [j]went every man to his place. Thus God [k]returned the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father in slaying his seventy brethren, and all the wickedness of the men of Shechem did God re-

[h] 2 Sa. 11. 21. *cf.* ch. 5. 24–30.

[i] 1 Sa. 31. 4.

[j] 2 Sa. 18. 17.

[k] Ps. 94. 23.

It is not the power that makes Abimelech that can unmake him. He prevails against Shechem, only to perish by a woman's hand at Thebez.* Here the millstone reminds us of Babylon's overthrow, where, in Rev. xviii. 21, the symbol of the Old Testament prophet is taken up by the New. In these Babylon herself is figured by the millstone, as the hard and merciless grinder of God's wheat. In the story in Judges, the millstone is the cause of Abimelech's destruction; yet these two things are almost one: it is character that brings destruction from God; and the woman's hand, what is it but the Church of God whose cries have gone up to God, and who in this way brings the punishment? The mill-stone

*Suggested by another: Thebez, "brightness," aiming at glory: in contrast with a glorified church, Rome meets her doom.

The resurrection of Israel: looking on to the day of glory.

turn upon their heads; and upon them came the curse of [l]Jotham the son of Jerubbaal. [l] vers. 20,21.

(X. 1-5.)

1. (x. 1, 2.) Tola: authority in the hands of the obedient one.

3. [1]And after Abimelech there [m]arose to save Israel Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim. And he judged Israel three and twenty years, and died, and was buried in Shamir. [m] ch. 8. 28.

and the woman's hand are thus really complementary thoughts that perfect the application.

3. Tola and Jair, following Abimelech, are in most marked and significant contrast with him. No warlike deeds are recorded of them: Israel seems to have enjoyed the most entire peace during the forty-five years of their united judgeship. Absolutely nothing is recorded of Tola except his descent, the place of his residence and burial, and the length of time during which he judged Israel. Of Jair personally even less is given; but the fact is noticed of his thirty sons who all attained to dignity in Israel. Out of these few and apparently not very important items we are to gather whatever spiritual lessons they can furnish.

That it is a flourishing period for the nation is quite consistent with there being but little history. Man's record is largely one of sorrows and crimes; and men whose names are written in large letters across the page get mostly their place there through either their own sins or those of others. Of these men their names are their sufficient witness, evidently because they answer to them: they are what they profess to be. Of each it is said that "he arose," and of Tola that he "arose to save Israel,"—more, perhaps, by what he was than by what he did; but the words mark, evidently, a resurrection time in Israel; the words "there arose after Abimelech to save Israel," seem to connect also in some way the previous section with the present; in what manner we may shortly learn.

(i.) The name of Tola has already been before us, as that of the head of a family in Issachar, to which tribe the present Tola also belongs. His name is that of the crimson "worm," the coccus of the oak, which yielded the "scarlet" or crimson employed in the tabernacle. The cry of the twenty-second psalm, "I am a *worm*, and no man," indicates the self-chosen humiliation of the blessed victim. The name Tola here, as that of the judge in Israel, shows at once the most striking contrast with Abimelech. It is lowly self-surrender, not self-exaltation, that marks this man of Issachar, a tribe which speaks to us also, as we have seen, of practical walk. He is the son of Puah, "utterance," who is himself the son of Dodo, "his beloved." Thus out of the consciousness of divine love in the soul comes the "utterance" which in the practical life becomes self-surrender to God. The Shamir in Mount Ephraim, in which he dwells, though different from that which we have before had, which was in Judah (Josh. xv. 48), should speak as that does of unchangeableness; yet not in God as in the Judean city, but rather, as its place in Ephraim would imply, of human character. If such were, indeed, that of Tola, it is easy to understand the twenty-three years' revival under his judgeship.

But is not this a prophetic glance on to the time when not Israel only, but the whole world, shall know the blessing of the rule of the incorruptible judge, of whom we cannot but have been reminded in this picture, and of whom we know that He transcends it? The reign of the thorn-bush has been all that yet man has seen, and the result of his choice of rulers will be nothing else until the Abimelechs have received their judgment. Then, indeed, the time of revival shall come with the presence of the Risen One, once crowned with the thorn, and now with glory forever. If Tola be a type, of whom else can he be a type but this? He who has "learned obedience by the things that He hath suffered," shall yet bring to obedience, and thus to blessedness in the time to which we hasten. Who but He can do this?

2. (x. 3-5.) Jair, and his dependent associates.

[2] And after him arose [n] Jair, the Gileadite, and he judged Israel two and twenty years. And he had thirty sons, who rode on thirty ass-colts; and they had thirty cities, which are called unto this day Havvoth-Jair, which are in the land of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

[n] ch. 12. 7.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. x. 6–xii.)

*Sowing and reaping: the Ammonite raids.*

(X. 6-XII. 7.)

Jephthah: the head of Gilead.

1. (x. 6-18.) Rebellion and repentance.

1. [1] AND the children of Israel did [o] again that which was evil in Jehovah's eyes, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook Jehovah, and served him not. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the [p] Philistines, and into the

[o] ch. 6. 1.

[p] Gen. 19. 38. ch. 3. 31.

(ii.) Jair, the Gileadite, seems now to confirm this witness. His name, "enlightener," is only to be applied in any full way to Him who is the One Light of men. And that he is the Gileadite may speak of the "heap of witness" (see Josh. xiii. *n.*) which Jair's burial would seem to remind us of, being buried in Camon (the place of resurrection) the grave that could not hold Him.

The thirty sons on thirty ass-colts, with their thirty cities, is in this case also plain. "They rode," says Cassel, "not merely as men of quality,—the usual explanation,—but as chiefs, governors, and judges. It was peculiar to such persons especially, that they made use of the ass, as the animal of peace. Their very appearance on this animal was expressive of their calling—to reconcile and pacify. The sons of Jair judged their thirty cities." The Lord's own riding into Jerusalem, and His parable of the pounds (Luke xix.) show us very simply the application here. Of the havvoth Jair, or "Jair's lives," we have spoken before (Josh. xiii. 11, *n.*).

Tola and Jair are thus the twofold witnesses of Him to whom yet the disorder of man's rule will give way, though it will be still and truly man's, the kingdom of the Son of man. For the Son of man cometh in the clouds of heaven, and henceforth they "shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending [in attendance] on the Son of man."

SUBD. 5.

The story of Jephthah and his successors comes in the fifth place among these captivities and deliverances; and where all show so strongly the divine government that is over all, it might seem little likely that this should specialize the lesson. Yet it seems really to do so when—and perhaps only when—we bring in the spiritual to interpret the literal. For if Ammon be typically what we have taken it to be, then we can see clearly how the Church, in its departure from God, sows in its own unbelief the seed of every heresy; or, to keep more strictly to the Lord's illustration, how when men sleep the enemy sows his tares. The Word neglected and despised, opens the way for every perversion of it. And this is righteous retribution.

But from first to last in this subdivision, the lesson seems especially enforced that as the sowing so is the reaping. Look at the Ephraimites in proof, where their own taunt is returned upon them to the full, as well as their harshness.

(i.) Again the story is repeated of Israel's departure from God, and their chastening by the hand of those after whose gods they had gone. Indeed, the gods of every nation round had now their worship, and Jehovah alone is de-

hand of the children of [q]Ammon. And they harassed and crushed the children of Israel [from] that year [r]eighteen years—all the children of Israel that were on the [s]other side Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. And the children of Ammon [t]passed over Jordan, to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; and Israel was sore [u]distressed. And the children of Israel [v]cried unto Jehovah, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served the Baals. And Jehovah said unto the children of Israel, [w]Did not I [save you] from the Egyptians, and from the Amorite, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? And the Zidonians, and Amalek, and Maon, oppressed you, and ye cried unto me, and I saved you out of their hand. But ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I [x]will not save you again. [y]Go and cry unto the gods that ye have chosen: let them save

q ch. 3. 13.
r ch. 6. 1. ch. 13. 1.
s *cf.* Nu. 32. 1, etc.
t ch. 6. 3.
u ch. 4. 3.
v ch. 3. 9. Ps. 107. 11–13.
w ch. 6. 7–10.
x *cf.* Josh. 7. 12.
y Deut. 32. 37, 38. 2 Ki. 3. 13. Jer. 2. 28.

prived of His. He sells them, therefore, again into the hands of the Philistines and of the Ammonites at once. The Ammonite scourge is spoken of in the section now before us; the Philistine bondage is not broken until we reach the book of Samuel, although Samson, as prophesied of him, *begins* the deliverance (ch. xiii. 5).

The Ammonites depict, as we have found reason to believe (Deut. ii. 19, sq. *n.*), what the "tares" do in the second parable of the thirteenth of Matthew, the fruit of the seed of Satan's sowing within the limits of the kingdom of heaven. The good seed is the word of God, and the product of it the children of the kingdom; but the word of God is not what Satan sows, but some corruption of the truth, and the fruit of this is in errorists of multiple forms. This interpretation is confirmed as to the Ammonites by the fact that we find them not content with the subjugation of Israel: they claim, on the ground of their own title to it, to *take away the land*. From Ammon to Jabbok, the kingdom of Sihon formerly, now the inheritance of Reuben and of Gad, they contend that Israel had robbed them of all this when they came out of Egypt; and they ask plainly for its restoration. Thus it is plain would heresy take away the portion of the people of God. And it is noteworthy that it is the land east of the Jordan which they *openly* demand, though, in fact, making this a vantage-ground for their attack upon the tribes across the river.

Now Sihon's kingdom we have taken to be the dominion of reason, which faith (Reuben) is to reconstitute and hold; and here is commonly where error begins the attack. Even in its superstitious forms it will be found to have its root in rationalism: the word of God is displaced from its authority, as we see in Romanism. Hence we find Jephthah quoting the Word against the king of the Ammonites: much of what he says being simply a quotation from the book of Numbers. The word of God has, indeed, given faith secure title to the whole province of reason, which rationalistic error has ever proved itself incompetent to hold, soon losing it to the Amorites, the infidel "talkers" against God. This is Jephthah's plea, in fact, against Ammon, that they had so lost it to Sihon before Israel had gained possession, and that from Sihon, in fact, Israel had wrested it. Faith is ever and only the fullest reason; and the word of God it is that is alone able to make the whole field of reason a fruitful and goodly portion. If we do not hold it, we expose Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, to the Ammonite attack, and open a way to the loss of all heavenly blessings. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not," says the Son of God Himself, "how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

you in the time of your distress. And the children of Israel said unto Jehovah, We have [z]sinned: do thou to us according to all that is good in thine eyes; only deliver us, we pray thee, this day. And they [a]put away the strange gods from among them, and served Jehovah: and his soul was [b]distressed with the travail of Israel.

2. (x.17-xi. 11.) The covenant with Jephthah.

[2]And the children of Ammon were called [c]together and encamped in Gilead; and the children of Israel were gathered together and encamped in Mizpeh. And the people, the princes of Gilead, said one to another, [d]Who is the man that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be the head of all the inhabitants of Gilead. Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the [e]son of a harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and the wife's sons grew up and they [f]drave out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house: for thou art the son of another woman. And Jephthah [g]fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob; and there were gathered unto Jephthah [h]worthless men, and they went forth with him. And it came to pass after a while that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead came to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob. And they said unto Jephthah, Come and be our captain, that we may fight against the children of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did ye not [i]hate me, and drive me out of my father's house? and why are ye come to me now, when ye are in distress? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore turn we again to thee now, that

z ch. 2. 4, 5. cf. Dan. 9. 5, 6.
a 1 Sam. 7. 4.
b Ex. 2. 25. Ps. 106. 44, 45.
c ch. 11. 11, 29. Gen. 31, 49.
d cf. ch. 1. 1.
e cf. Gen. 38. 24, 25, 29, with Matt. 1. 3. Is. 53. 3.
f cf. Gen. 37. 4, 8, 27.
g cf. Ex. 2. 14, 15. 1 Sam. 21. 10, 11.
h ch. 9. 4. 1 Sam. 22. 2.
i Acts 7. 35.

Of how much importance is it to insist upon this, to-day! Scripture is true and trustworthy every where, or it is to be trusted nowhere. Let us take our stand boldly there, if we would retain anything of what God has given to us. And away with the unbelieving thought that Scripture is not meant to teach us science! Let us rather say that it is meant to teach whatever it *does* teach. It is light, not darkness; truth, and only truth; the soul of reason; the illumination of all it touches.

And here the name of the deliverer seems to be most significant. Jephthah is a word we have had already: it is the Jiphtah of Joshua xv. 43, and the Jiphtah-[el] of xix. 14, 27. It means "he opens," and in the first place we have taken it as applying to Christ opening the heavenly places for us; in the others, to *God's* opening—El being added—whether of spiritual truth, or of the heart to receive it. How simply does this show us the deliverer from the children of Ammon, whether we may apply it to Scripture as opening truth, or Christ as the subject of Scripture, and the true light everywhere. These things are practically one, and in closest relation to what we have just been saying. "Scripture opens" —is truth, is science, puts Sihon's king into the hand of faith. To maintain it thus is true deliverance from Ammonite heresy; while thus our portion in the land is covered from attack—Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, are made secure from every inroad of this kind.

thou mayst go with us and fight against the children of Ammon, and mayst be our [j]head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me back to fight against the children of Ammon, and Jehovah give them up before me, [k]shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Jehovah be witness between us if we do not according to thy word. And Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people set him over them as head and captain; and Jephthah uttered all his words before Jehovah at Mizpeh.

3. (xi.12-33.) Realization of blessing.

[3]And Jephthah sent [l]messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What is between me and thee, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the children of Ammon said unto Jephthah's messengers, Because Israel [m]took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok and to Jordan: now then [n]restore it peaceably. And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon, and said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon; but when they came up out of Egypt, then Israel walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh. And Israel sent [o]messengers to the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land; but the king of Edom did not hearken. And in like manner sent they to the king of [p]Moab; but he would not: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went through the wilderness and [q]compassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and came toward sunrise of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of Arnon, and came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto [r]Sihon, king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon, and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place. But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass his border, and Sihon gathered all his people, and encamped toward Jahaz and fought with Israel. And Jehovah the God of Israel [s]gave Sihon and all his people into Israel's hand, and they smote them: and Israel possessed all the land of the Amorite who dwelt in that land; yea, Israel possessed all the border of the Amorite from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the God of Israel hath [t]dispossessed the Amorite from before his people Israel; and shalt thou take possession

j ch. 10. 18.

k *ctr.* ch. 8. 22, 23.

l 1 Sam. 11. 1. 2 Sam. 10. 2.

m *cf.* Num. 21. 24 with Deut. 2. 19, 36, 37.

n *cf.* Gal. 1. 6. with Gal. 2. 5.

o Num. 20. 14-21.

p Deut. 2. 9.

q Num. 21. 4.

r Num. 21. 21-31.

s Deut. 2. 26 -35.

t Deut. 2. 36

Jephthah, too, is a Gileadite, and thus a Manassite. His being made head of Gilead figures largely, as we see, in the deliverance. It is only he who goes on in the truth, making progress in the acquisition of the divine treasure, who can preserve from the Ammonite raider the treasure of the past. But as a Manassite also, let us remember, he enters into the things that are beyond, the heritage

of it? Wilt not thou possess that which [u]Chemosh thy God maketh thee possess? so whatsoever Jehovah our God maketh us to possess, that we will possess. And now art thou better than [v]Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever contend with Israel, or did he fight against them? Since Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her dependencies, and in Aroer and her dependencies, and in all the cities that are on the banks of Arnon, [it is] [w]three hundred years: why then have ye not recovered them within that time? I have not, then, sinned against thee, but thou hast done me wrong to war against me. Jehovah who judgeth [x]judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

But the king of the children of Ammon did not hearken to the words of Jephthah which he sent to him. And the [y]Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead passed over to the children of Ammon. And Jephthah [z]vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed give the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth to meet me, coming forth from the doors of my house, shall be Jehovah's, and I will offer it up for a whole offering.*

And Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and Jehovah [a]gave them into his hand. And he smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minnith, twenty cities, even to Abel Keramim—a very great slaughter; and the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

4.(xi. 34–40.) Testing.

[4]And Jephthah came to Mizpeh, to his house, and behold, his daughter coming forth to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was [b]his only child: beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it was so, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes; and he said, Ah, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low! yea, thou hast come to be of those that afflict me: for I have [c]opened my mouth to Jehovah, and

u ch. 10. 14. 1 Ki. 11. 7. Jer. 48. 7. *cf.* ch. 6. 31.

v Nu. chaps. 22–24.

w *cf.* Gal. 3. 17.

x Gen. 31. 53.

y ch. 3. 10.

z Lev. 5. 4. Lev. 27. 1–8.

a Num. 21. 2, 3. Josh. 10. 8–10, etc.

b *cf.* Gen. 22. 2. Lk. 9. 38. Jno. 3. 16.

c Num. 30. 2. Ps. 15. 4. Eccl. 5. 2–5. *ctr.* Matt. 5. 33–37. *cf.* Acts 18. 18.

* The same word as translated elsewhere "*burnt*-offering," but the idea of burning is not necessarily implied. Solomon's "*ascent* by which he went up to the house of Jehovah" (1 Kings x. 5) is the same word: it means "what ascends," and it seems well to avoid here the unnecessary difficulty connected with the use of the common English term. (See the Notes.)

across Jordan also, and connects it with the inheritance on this side. He who in the spiritual reality can hold these things together is the true deliverer from the raids of the Ammonite.

(iv.) As to Jephthah's vow, there seem haste and failure in it, but surely not the human sacrifice that many have imagined. Most recent commentators agree in this, and believe that his daughter was simply consecrated to God, to live an unmarried life, as verses 37–39 seem plainly to show. There is not a word about death in her case, save what is supposed to be involved in the 31st verse, "I will offer it up a burnt-offering." But Jephthah's words to the king of

cannot draw back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth to Jehovah, [d]do to me according to what hath gone out of thy mouth; [e]since Jehovah hath done vengeance for thee upon thine enemies, upon the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done to me: let me alone two months that I may go and descend to the mountains, and [f]bewail my virginity, I and my companions. And he said unto her, Go. And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it was so, at the end of two months, that she returned to her father, and he did to her [g]according to his vow that he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel, for the daughters of Israel to go from year to year to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in the year.

d Gen. 22. 7–9, but *cf.* ver. 39 with Gen. 30. 1.

e *cf.* 2 Sam. 19, 29, 30.

f *cf.* 1 Sam. 1. 6, 10, 11, 15.

g ver. 30.

Ammon show him to be acquainted with the law; and by the law such an offering was forbidden as an abomination. (Lev. xviii. 21, etc.) No altar could have been found for it; no priest would have performed it; and the two months of mourning on the mountains would have given ample time for the news of the contemplated sacrifice to have spread far in Israel. To suppose that under the circumstances he could have been ignorant of the law, or that, knowing it, he could have had such a passion to sacrifice the daughter he loved, as in the face of it to persevere in offering to Jehovah an abomination that He hated, seems incredible enough. Everything is against the perpetration of such a crime; and the Hebrew certainly allows the translation of "*or*" instead of "*and* I will offer it." "The great Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages," says Edersheim, "have, in opposition to the Talmud, pointed out that these two last clauses are *not* identical. It is never said of an *animal* burnt-offering that it 'should be to Jehovah,'—for the simple reason that as a burnt-offering it *is* such. But where human beings are offered to Jehovah, there the expression is used, as in the case of the first-born among Israel and of Levi (Nu. iii. 12, 13). But in these cases it has never been suggested that there was actual human sacrifice." He urges, as do others: "If the loving daughter had devoted herself to *death*, it is next to incredible that she should have wished to have spent the two months of life conceded to her, not with her broken-hearted father, but in the mountains with her companions."

After all, the word does not actually mean, in Hebrew, "*burnt*-offering," but simply an "offering that ascends"—*all* ascends—to God. And this makes a great difference. Jephthah did *not* pledge himself that the offering should be *burnt*, though that were the way in which an animal sacrifice would "ascend." I have felt a necessity, therefore, of omitting this word from the translation. It is probably all that is really needed to avoid the difficulty.

In any case the history remains a witness to and against the terrible legality of the human heart which could thus shadow the joy of such a deliverance at the moment of its being granted. Such vowing is now expressly forbidden by our Lord: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all." God's will needs not man's will to supplement, but only to *obey*, it. To undertake obedience all uncalled for is only to subject one's self to bondage to one's own infirmity.

As tested, however, by the consequences of his vow, Jephthah, though smitten to the heart, abides the test, and proves his loyalty to Jehovah, a loyalty shared to the full by his noble daughter. Not even her name is inscribed upon the

5. (xii. 1-7.) Retribution.

5 And the men of [h] Ephraim were called together, and passed over northward, and said unto Jephthah, Why didst thou pass over to fight against the children of Ammon, and calledst us not to go with thee? we will burn thy house over thee with fire. And Jephthah said unto them, I was at great strife, I and my people, with the children of Ammon, and I called you, but ye did [i] not save me out of his hand. And when I saw that there was no deliverance with you, I put my life in my hand, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and Jehovah gave them into my hand: why, then, are ye come up to me this day, to fight against me? And Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and [j] fought with Ephraim; and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim in the midst of Ephraim [and] Manasseh. And the Gileadites took the fords of Jordan against Ephraim; and it was so, when [one of] the fugitives of Ephraim said, Let me pass over, that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? And he said, No. And they said unto him, Say now [k] Shibboleth. And he said, Sibboleth; for he did not frame to pronounce it rightly. Then they took him and slew him at the fords of Jordan. And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites [l] forty-two thousand.

And Jephthah [m] judged Israel six years. And Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in [one of] the cities of Gilead.

h ch. 8. 1.

i *cf.* ch. 10.9.

j *ctr.* ch. 8.2.

k *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 10-15. Jas. 4. 1.

l *cf.* ch. 20. 21, 25. Gal.5.14,15.

m v. 9.

Jephthah's successors.

(XII. 8-15.)

1. (*vv.* 8-10.) Ibzan: "purity."

2. [1] And after him [n] Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. And he had thirty sons; and thirty daughters he sent

n ver. 7. *cf.* Matt.2.6.

record here, but she fully takes her place among the great historic women of Israel.

(v.) We have still to speak of the Ephraimite outrage and its chastisement. It is a more violent repetition of their conduct toward Gideon, but which meets in this case a terrible retribution. The pride of Ephraim is typically an admonition for us,—a much-needed one. How readily does "fruitfulness" get spoiled by the blight of self-complacency!—and what sore rebukes does it necessitate for us, that we may be delivered from that which was the condemnation of the devil! (1 Tim. iii. 6). Their taunting words as to the Gileadites became true to the letter as to themselves when they became, indeed, "fugitives of Ephraim among the Manassites," who, alas, do not spare them. The quarrels of brethren are, of all, the severest: in proportion to the closeness of the ties sundered is the bitterness aroused: civil strife is proverbially the most *un*civil.

2. Very briefly indeed we have now the account of Jephthah's successors. As the quiet for twenty-five years after his death was doubtless the result of his victory, so also do they seem to represent, in their names and connection, the consequences spiritually. We have scarcely anything *except* names here; so that, if these are meaningless, the history as a whole can be little else. Any escape from such a conclusion—any light where otherwise all must be darkness—cannot then but be welcome.

(i.) There are three successors, the first two of whom are Zebulonites; the third apparently an Ephraimite. Of Ibzan himself we have only the fact of his being a Bethlehemite. This Bethlehem is not that of Judah, but the one named

out of the house, and thirty daughters he took in from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years; and Ibzan died, and was buried in Bethlehem.

2. (*vv.*11,12.) Elon: growth.

[2]And after him [o]Elon the Zebulonite judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Ajalon, in the land of Zebulon.

[o] ch. 5. 14.

3. (*vv.*13–15.) Abdon: consecration.

[3]And after him [p]Abdon, the son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy ass colts. And he judged Israel eight years; and Abdon the son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekite.

[p] ver. 11.

SUBDIVISION 6. (Chap. xiii.–xvi.)

*Samson and the Philistines: victory, but not rest.*

The announcement and birth of the man of power.

(XIII.)

1. (*vv.* 1–7.) The first announcement.

1.[1]AND the children of Israel [q]again did that which was evil in Jehovah's sight; and Jehovah gave them into the hand of the Philistines [r]forty years. And there was a certain man of Zoreah, of the family of the

[q] ch. 10. 6.

[r] ch. 6. 1.

in Joshua (xix. 15) as belonging to Zebulon. Of course it has the same significance. Ibzan is said to mean "labor," "great labor." This is from the near-akin Chaldee. If from the Hebrew directly, then we must decide for "white," perhaps "shining." Taking the first, and remembering that Jephthah speaks of "opening" the truth, "labor" in the "place of bread" seems nearly and naturally connected as a consequence. On the other hand, "white," the common symbol of purity, is no less natural; and more suitable, perhaps, in the place in which he stands here, first in succession. Sanctification is by the truth, and that satisfaction for the soul which "bread"—the "bread of life"—denotes, is a main element in sanctification. That he is a Zebulonite is quite in keeping; and the ties that we find spoken of as binding him with others may well imply the spiritual links that form where the word of God is felt in power and spread abroad. He is a fitting successor, then, to Jephthah.

(ii.) Elon, the "oak," comes next, implying strength as the product of life and growth. Growth by the truth fits well the second place,—Elon being again a Zebulonite. Nothing else is recorded of him but that he judged Israel ten years and was buried in Ajalon.

(iii.) The third judge is Abdon, "service," the son of Hillel, "praising," a Pirathonite, or dweller in "freedom,"—thoughts which are too coherent and too easily understood in their connection by every Christian heart to need either expansion or insisting on. That Pirathon is in Ephraim connects again liberty with fruitfulness; and "in the mount of the Amalekites" may refer to some past victory over them, or at least to a possession of the land on their part which no longer existed. In the whole of this the spirit of consecration speaks, and that is doubtless the truth presented here. The free service which is the fruit of praise has succeeded to the old Amalekite misrule of "lusts that war in the members": and this, with what has been brought before us in the judges preceding Abdon, gives us well the fruit of such victories as those of Jephthah typify,—for us the victories of the Word of truth.

SUBD. 6.

The story of Samson, the last of the judges in this book, is fittingly a sixth and not a seventh subdivision; nor have we a seventh. The number, we well know, to be significant of evil at its height, even though it speak also of limit set to and victory over it: and to this, in every particular, the history corresponds.

Danites, and his name was Manoah. And his wife was [s]barren, and did not bear. And the [t]angel of Jehovah appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive and bear a son. And now, I pray thee, beware

s Gen. 11. 30. Gen. 25. 21. Gen. 29. 31. 1 Sam. 1. 2. Lk. 1. 7.

t *cf.* ch. 6. 12.

It is one of strange contrasts and of apparent contradictions: one in which the grace and purpose of God, so manifest in it, seem so little fulfilled in the result; in which the consecration of the Nazarite to God has so little correspondence to any spiritual condition that all through, if we are confined to the letter, there seems scarce a gleam of comfort for the Christian heart. The failure of man is plain, whatever the circumstances in which he may be placed: the greater privileges bestowed on him, the deeper only is his fall. Samson, in this way,—by the strength of the Lord which he manifests, and his loss of it when false to his consecration,—is a lesson impossible to be mistaken as to Israel's condition, who were themselves thus nationally separated to God, and untrue to their separation. The Church has failed more signally, inasmuch as she has been called to, and qualified for, a higher separation. Nor, though there have been, and may yet be, partial revivals, will there be for her any complete recovery. Her earthly history ends, as that of this book does, in Philistine captivity still in the main unbroken.

The reason is obvious as to Israel: we read of fresh departure, but of no return nor cry to Jehovah. He acts toward them, indeed, in goodness, and provides a deliverer; but the deliverance itself, being still conditioned upon their repentance, cannot be effected. Samson's victories bring about, at the most, but an alleviation of their distress; and he himself fails at the last, and dies, though slaying more of the Philistines at his death than in his life.

We have seen, abundantly, what these Philistines stand for. They are the ritualistic, traditional, element in Christendom,—the Judaism in the Church,—the earthly intrusion into what is spiritual and heavenly. We have seen them as hindrances in the path of Abraham and of Isaac, and traced them from the Egyptians by Casluhim and Caphtorim, the united people settling at last on the outward border of the land to which,—Palestine from Philistine,—though never possessing but a fraction, they have given their name. So has the world-church become the "catholic" or universal church.

From Philistine bondage the deliverer is a Nazarite; and thus Samuel, who completes Samson's work, is like him in this respect. For the Nazarite is the type of separation from the world, such as belongs to the true church,—from the intoxication of its joys and from its legal claims, as well as from its pollutions; and let this separation be lost, all strength is lost,—the conqueror becomes the slave, the clear sight of the judge becomes but blindness: the history of Samson is repeated. How many times has it been, in fact, repeated!

1. With Samson we are made to see, from the outset, the sovereign grace which prepares the deliverance. His birth is announced by the angel of the Lord, apart from any apparent seeking upon man's part. He is the son of a woman naturally barren; and the preparation for his coming antedates his birth. In this last it is implied that there are still conditions to be conformed to in order to deliverance.

(i.) The predicted deliverer is of the family of Dan. Dan speaks already of the service of rule, as we have seen,—a rule which must, for blessing, be first of all over one's self. Manoah is a man of Zorah, which reminds us of the sting of sin; while his name, "rest," nevertheless proclaims already victory over it. The victory is in subjection: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here is the Danite spirit from which springs the helper.

It is to the woman, however, to whom the angel first appears, and her name we have not. She is reminded of her barrenness, that God's grace and power

that thou [u]drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat nothing unclean. For behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son, and no [v]razor shall come upon his head: for the child shall be a [w]Nazarite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. And the woman went and said to her husband, A man of God came unto me, and his [x]appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very terrible; but I asked him not whence he was, nor did he tell me his name. And he said unto me, Behold, thou shall conceive and bear a son; and now, drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat nothing unclean: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

2. (*vv.* 8–23.) The second announcement.

[2]And Manoah prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Ah Lord! let the man of God whom thou didst send, come again to us, I pray thee, and [y]teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman hastened and ran and told her husband, and said, Behold, the man hath appeared to me who came to me that day. And Manoah arose and went after his wife, and came unto the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spake unto the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said, When now thy words come to pass, how shall we order the child, and what shall we do as to him? And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her take heed. Of all the produce of the wine-vine shall she not eat, nor shall she drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: of all that I said unto her shall she take heed. And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, I pray thee, let us [z]detain thee that we may make ready a kid for thee. And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will [a]not eat of thy bread; and if thou preparest an

[u] Lk. 1. 15.
[v] 1 Sam. 1. 11.
[w] Num. 6. 1-12.
[x] Matt. 28. 3-5.
[y] *cf.* Gen. 18. 19. Eph. 6. 4.
[z] Gen. 18. 5. ch. 6. 18-23.
[a] *cf.* Gen. 19. 3.

may the more appear. She is herself nothing, her very name without importance, and that of her husband unnoticed in the message of the angel: for all here is of God. And agreeing with this is the special emphasis laid upon the woman's long hair of the Nazarite, to the man a shame, and the renunciation of his glory as such (1 Cor. xi.). Oh the blessing that results when *all* the glory is given to God, and man owns himself naturally to have forfeited all, that grace may *be* grace!

(ii.) In correspondence with all this, it is the woman who receives most readily the divine communication. Manoah, pious as he is, does not feel so sure of its character and meaning. But he looks to God, and is confirmed by the angel's second visit. This is still to the woman first, but who is permitted to call her husband, that he too may hear from the angel's lips. But Manoah as yet recognizes only a human messenger, even while recognizing the message. The angel insists simply upon obedience to the word already given; and when Manoah desires to entertain him, refuses to receive from him as man, but bids

offering, offer it unto [b]Jehovah. But Manoah knew not that he was an angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, What is thy name? that when thy words come to pass, we may do thee honor. And the angel of Jehovah said unto him, Why askest thou after my name, when it is [c]wonderful? And Manoah took the kid and the meal-offering, and offered it upon the [d]rock unto Jehovah: and he did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up to heaven from the altar, that the angel of Jehovah [e]ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife were looking on, and they [f]fell upon their faces to the ground. And the angel of Jehovah appeared no more unto Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely [g]die: for we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, [h]If Jehovah were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and meal-offering at our hand; nor would he have shown us all these things, nor would he as now have told us things like these.

3. (*vv.* 24,25.) The word fulfilled.

[3]And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew; and Jehovah blessed him. And the [i]Spirit of Jehovah began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

*b cf.* Rev.22. 8, 9.

*c* Gen. 32.29. Is. 9. 6.

*d* ch. 6. 20. *cf.* Matt.16. 18.

*e cf.* Lev.1.9.

*f* Lev. 9. 24. Matt. 17. 6.

*g* ch. 6. 22. Is. 6. 5. *ctr.*2 Cor.3. 18.

*h cf.* Gen. 8. 20, 21. Eph. 5. 2. with Heb. 10. 14.

*i* ch. 14. 19. 1 Sa. 11. 6. *ctr.* Jno. 14. 16.

him offer a burnt-offering to Jehovah. Like Gideon, he is constituted thus a priest to the Lord: the unbelief of the believer is rebuked by his being brought into nearer intimacy; he is turned from man to God, and put into a place in which, in priestly fashion, he may approach God. But Manoah cannot yet understand, and would learn the name of the speaker, that when his word is fulfilled they may, as man, do him honor. Thus the angel's question, *why* he should ask after his name?—yet adding, what might well justify inquiry, that it was "Wonderful,"—a name which Isaiah afterward gives us as "Immanuel's" (ch. ix. 6); and here, indeed, God and man are brought together in one Person. But Manoah does not yet understand. Still, obedient, he brings his kid and the meal-offering which goes with it, the blessed type of Him in whom a perfect Man would be in due time the Substitute for man, and offers it upon the rock,—no unworthy altar. Then the angel of Jehovah acts according to His name, and ascends to heaven in the altar-flame. God in His holiness is indeed that which, while it consumes the sacrifice turns it to sweet savor, in which it ascends to Him. With this flame the angel, as it were, identifies Himself, and ascends up to heaven. Thus He is revealed to Manoah; thus in the truth of what is here He is made known to every believing sinner, and takes His true and heavenly place.

The woman still it is who enters into the mind of God, however; and her identification with the true Nazarite character, as in the Nazarite's long hair, is emphasized, as well as the connection of this preparatory part with the history that follows. Her reasoning is simplicity itself, and the truth of it a demonstration. Faith is indeed always simple; unbelief laborious and roundabout, for it is the effort of human will against God, and may well be labor.

(iii.) And now the prophecy is fulfilled, and Samson is born. The name is variously explained. While that of "sun-like" would be etymologically the most simple, and have some support from the words of Deborah's song (ch. v. 31),

Alliance which brings conflict.

1.(xiv.) The personal experience, unknown outside of him who has it.

(XIV., XV.)

2. And Samson [j] went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the [k] Philistines: now, therefore, take her for me to wife. And his father said unto him, and his mother, Is there not a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, nor among

[j] ch. 16. 1, 4. *cf.* Gen. 12. 10.

[k] *cf.* Deut. 7. 3.

yet that of Josephus, "strong," seems rather to point to the lesson of his story.* It is the secret of strength that is shown forth in him, both in his victories and in his failure and defeat; and thus it is very far from true that (as Cassel thinks) such an explanation appears to be without historical motive.

Samson grows, and the Spirit of Jehovah begins to urge him in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. It had been that of the six hundred men, whose history is given us further on (ch. xviii), although the occurrence was much earlier than Samson's time, and who had gone forth, pressed by the narrow limits into which Amorites and Philistines had combined to crowd them, to found for themselves a new Dan in the north. Such a spot would naturally work upon the youthful mind of Samson, and be used of the Spirit to inspire him with eager patriotism,—a thing which in Israel had not alone nature to commend it. Israel were the people of God, the divine means of fore-ordained blessing for all the families of the earth, and to whom the revelation of God had been committed. The champion of Israel was, by this fact, and though he might have but little intelligence of the fact, the champion of the world's salvation.

2. As Keil rightly remarks, the story of Samson's deeds that follows is divided into two parts by the notice of his judgeship in Israel, which lasted twenty years. The first of these — the present section — gives evidently the heroic acts which win for him the place of acknowledged authority which he retains for the time; while the second shows his fall and ruin through being false to his Nazariteship, though in his death he is once more victorious. This descent and restoration, though but at the close of his career, mark the last as a true third section.

The present, as Keil again points out, "includes six distinct acts, which are grouped together in twos; namely (1 and 2), the killing of the lion on the way to Timnath, and the slaughter of the thirty Philistines for the purpose of paying for the solution of his riddle with the clothes that he took from them; (3 and 4), his revenge upon the Philistines by burning their crops, because his wife had been given to a Philistine, and also by the great slaughter with which he punished them for having burned his father-in-law and wife; (5 and 6), the bursting of the cords with which his countrymen had bound him for the purpose of delivering him up to the Philistines, and the slaying of a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass." Of course it does not follow that these six acts sufficiently characterize the portions with which they stand connected; while yet, in this simple way, a numerical structure is shown to exist. This, we may be sure, must have its significance. The number 6 is itself, as we have seen, characteristic of the whole history of Samson; and this, broken up into 3 x 2, becomes the witness of the divine in the midst of all the human failure and sorrow attendant.

(i.) The story in all this part is a closely connected one, and all the events spring out of — what is sadly significant as to the final issue here — Samson's attempt to connect himself with the very people from whom he is to "begin to deliver" Israel. The alliance it is that is the occasion of the conflict: the

* "*Shimshon* (lxx. Samson) does not mean 'sun-like,' 'hero of the sun,' from *shemesh* (the sun), but, as Josephus explains it (Ant. v., 8, 4), ἰσχυρός, the strong or daring one; from *shimshom*, from the intensive form *shimshem* of *shamem*, in its original sense of 'to be strong,' or 'daring,' not 'to devastate.'"—(Keil.)

all my people, that thou art going to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Take her for me, for she is [l] fair in mine eyes. And his father and mother knew not that it was [m] of Jehovah, that he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines; and the Philistines at that time were ruling in Israel. And Samson and his father and his mother went down to Timnath; and when they came to the vineyards of Timnath, behold, a young [n] lion roaring against him. And the Spirit of Jehovah came suddenly upon him, and he [o] rent him as one rends a kid; and he had nothing in his hand: and he told not his father or his mother what he had done. And he went down and talked with the woman, and she was right in

*l ctr.* Rom. 15. 1–3.
*m cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 15. 1 Chr. 21. 1. with 2 Sa. 24. 1.
*n cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.
*o* 1 Sa. 17. 34.

Philistine and the Nazarite cannot really unite, and the attempt to do so only brings out the essential incompatibility. The Nazarite stands for separation from the world, over which death reigns. The Philistine shows us the world brought in into the holiest things. The women stand here, as they do in the case of Sarah and Hagar, for principles by the embracing of which fruit is sought: and alas, how often do we seek to gain over the world by concessions to the world!—by the adoption of principles which compromise the whole truth of God. Timnath speaks, as we have before seen, of "apportionment," which, if the town were Israelite, would be divine,—a lot measured out to us from God; but being Philistine, where Dagon, "increase," has usurped His place, we have a striking confirmation of what has already been indicated as the meaning here. When we measure things by results, these must be, of course, palpable results: those divinely ordained are apt to be too far off, too slow in development, not to say too purely spiritual also, to admit of present discernment and of right appraisal. Thus one Nazarite in desire may be led by an impetuous longing for gains capable of speedy realization, to take up with methods which are worldly and carnal (Philistine), but which, on that very account, yield present fruit. How many souls, in fact, and these often the strongest and most earnest, are thus seduced into Timnathite marriages! How good to remember here the "long patience" needed by the husbandman in order to garner the precious grain; and that duty is ours, results are to be left with God, as they may be safely left. A Timnathite woman may "please" even a Samson "well," and elder Israelites be overborne, if not deceived, into acquiescence, as were Manoah and his wife; none the less is she Philistine,—the whole thing, indeed, tending directly to the snare of Dagon-worship. Let those who would be helpers in the deliverance of Israel beware of this.

It is quite natural that the Timnathite vineyards should contain lions also. Satan is here in this among his many forms; and the seduction may lead into the ambush, and so the open assault. But here he is to be less feared than elsewhere. The soldier of Christ is more easily lulled to sleep than overcome in battle. The Spirit of Jehovah at once comes upon Samson, and he awakes to his strength, gaining thus a personal experience which is to be fruitful for him afterwards. He rends the lion without a weapon in his hand, and as easily as one would a kid. It is the power of God, but realized in the living energy of man, stripped and bare of all other assistance. With such help the mightiest foe is as easily vanquished as the feeblest. No need to measure difficulties, save only to assure one's self that the greatest opposition means the greatest triumph; and again, it is the glory of the earthen vessel that the excellency of the power should be of God and not of us.

Yet, after all, spite of this display of strength, Samson is not right with God; and his history is most sadly instructive in this respect. He slays the open foe, and is deceived into the Philistine alliance; and how many are like him to-day.

Samson's eyes. And after a while he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion, and behold, a congregation of bees in the carcase of the lion, and honey. And he took of it in his hands, and went on, eating as he went, and came unto his father and his mother, and gave to them and they did eat; but he told them not that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

And his father went down unto the woman, and there Samson made a [p]feast: for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can truly declare it to me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then will I give you thirty shirts and thirty changes of garments; and if ye cannot declare it to me, then shall ye give me thirty shirts and thirty changes of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, [q]Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days explain the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day that they said unto Samson's wife, [r]Persuade thy husband, that he may declare the riddle to us, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye invited us to impoverish us? is it not so? And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou but

*p ctr.* Jno. 2. 1-11.

*q cf.* Gen. 1. 20. Phil. 1. 12-18.

*r* ch. 16. 5.

People can quote the heroism, and use it to set off the Timnathite's son-in-law: God uses it in the end to break off the alliance. He is bringing the blind by a way he sees not.

But he comes to take the woman that pleases him, and a new experience awaits him on the road. A swarm of bees had hived in the sun-dried carcass of the lion. Death had made room for multitudinous life, and abundant and ordered* activities; and as the product of this there is the honey that, with milk, gave a special character to the land of Canaan. Thus "out of the eater had come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness." Out of the power that was against us, met and subdued by the mightier power of God, comes ever sweetness and refreshment for the people of God: and this because of life that has come in in the place of death, and order that has arisen out of the hold of corruption. And this is true Nazarite experience of the transforming power of God, by which that which is contrary to us becomes ever for us. On the cross this was most gloriously manifest, where power was shown in weakness; and in the worst act of rebellion that the world has seen, grace came in to subdue and sanctify to God. So in measure it is in every defeat of the enemy, where the Spirit of God works in the living energy of the saint of God — the Nazarite. The battle-field becomes a banqueting-house; the table is furnished not only "in the *presence* of our enemies," but from that which they have provided. But this is the personal experience of faith,— a secret hidden from all but those who have the experience.

* "The swarm of bees is significantly spoken of as the *congregation* of bees. Commonly *edah* designates the congregation of Israel, as regulated by the law. . . . Horapollo, in his work on Hieroglyphics (lib. i. 62), informs us that when the Egyptians wished to picture the idea of a people of law, they did it by the figure of a bee."— (Cassel.)

hatest me, and [s]lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle to the children of my people, and to me thou hast not told it. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it to my father and mother, and shall I tell it thee? And she wept before him the seven days that the feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day that he told her: [t]for she pressed him hard; and she declared the riddle to the children of her people. And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day, before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. And the [u]Spirit of Jehovah came suddenly upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took the [v]spoil, and gave the changes of garments unto them that had declared the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. And Samson's [w]wife became his companion's who had attended him.

s ch. 16. 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 33. 1 Ki. 11. 1-4.

t *cf.* Lk. 18. 1-5.

u ver. 6.

v *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 25-27.

w ch. 15. 2.

2. (xv. 1-8.) Open conflict.

[2] And it came to pass after a time, in the days of wheat-harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid. And he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. And her father said unto him, I verily thought that thou hadst quite hated her; and I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? let her be thine, I pray thee, instead of her. And Samson said unto them, This time I am blameless toward the Philistines, though I do them harm. And Samson went and

And this leads on to that which follows, in which the fundamental lack of fellowship between Nazarite and Philistine comes clearly out, and the inevitable strife begins. Samson goes on to accomplish his marriage; makes a feast, according to the custom; and receives thirty companions, all Philistines, to be with him. He who is contracting a life-union with a woman of this people cannot refuse a wider connection. Immediately we find the riddle proposed,—a thing common enough in those days, as a test of wisdom; and which, we have to remember, as in Scripture not simply what the world counts such, but what is such before God. The riddle, in its spiritual meaning, is a true test of this; and it is not to be imagined that a Philistine can explain it. Samson has no such thought: but if they can do this, then they shall have each one a change of garments: for he that can penetrate the secrets of a life with God must have "habits" changed in accordance with it. They could not penetrate it: by dishonest practicing on the Philistine wife they learn it, and are repaid with *Philistine* garments from Ashkelon, the "fire of infamy." Thus they are suitably arrayed, and with their own shame; and so the necessary strife commences. The marriage is broken off; and Samson goes up to his father's house.

(ii.) The second part of this story now begins, in which Samson is in open conflict with the Philistines all through. At first, indeed, he goes to visit his wife with a kid, ignorant of what has taken place, and finds she has been given to the one who had acted as his "friend,"—the "friend of the bridegroom": a custom to which afterwards the Baptist makes well-known allusion (John iii. 29). His wrath breaks out, not as private vengeance against the Timnathite, however, but against the Philistines as a whole. He catches three hundred

[x] caught three hundred jackals, and took torches, and turned tail to tail, and put a torch in the midst, between the two tails. And when he had set the torches on fire, he sent them off into the Philistines' [y] standing corn, and burnt up both the shocks and the standing corn as well, with the olive-gardens. And the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they said, Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because he took his wife, and gave her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and [z] burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson said unto them, If ye act thus, I will certainly be avenged on you; and afterward I will cease. And he [a] smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter. And he went down, and abode in the [b] cleft of the cliff of Etam.

3. (xv. 6–20.) Raised in the power of the Spirit to the judgeship.

[3] And the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah, and [c] spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they

x *ctr.* 2 Sam. 5. 17–25. *cf.* Song 2. 15. Matt. 26. 51. 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4.

y 2 Sam. 14. 30, 31. *cf.* Deut. 20. 19, 20. Josh. 5. 11 with 2 Tim. 2. 8.

z ch. 14. 15.

a ch. 14. 19.

b *cf.* Ex. 33. 21–23 with 1 Cor. 10. 4.

c 2 Sam. 5. 17, 18, 22. ch. 6. 3–5. *cf.* 2 Pet. 1. 9.

jackals, and joining them in couples by the tails, with a lighted torch between the tails, he lets go the terrified animals into the cornfields and olive-yards, just at the time of harvest. The destruction must have been immense; and the terror of Samson had already become so great, that, instead of revenging it upon the Israelite enemy, they take cowardly vengeance upon those that had provoked his wrath, and burn the Timnathite and her father with fire. But this does the very opposite of appeasing him. He smites them hip and thigh with a great slaughter.

The spiritual meaning of all this is more difficult than in the last case. The jackal we have seen elsewhere (Joshua, p. 98) to be the type of a nature that burrows in the earth, and feeds upon corruption. The fire behind might well represent the terror of divine wrath when breaking in upon such natures, working upon them, not to conversion and blessing,—mere wrath never does,—but to madness: in which the desire to escape only spreads abroad in a general devastation what they would escape from. The torches, though here very differently used, remind us of those in the hands of Gideon's men, which wrought the destruction of the Midianites, and would show us this wrath as what is proclaimed in the testimony of living men. Times of widespread alarm in this way have been known in the history of the external church: panics which have been but disaster, and the anticipation of sure coming doom.

Something akin to this seems to be shadowed here, though it may be hard to follow it into details; nor can we speak with any distinctness of the slaughter which ensues. But we may notice that Samson in his proper position of hostility to the power to which Israel is captive is never defeated; nor does he need alliances, or subtlety, or human wisdom, in any way. Alone, and unassisted by human arm, he is ever victorious, as leaning upon almighty power. The lesson of divine sufficiency is complete in him; his very enemies have to recognize it. And this, in its principle, is not an exception to the ways of God. It is only the universal rule *written large* that we may the more plainly see it: to make an exception of it is to lose the lesson.

(iii.) The third stage of this strange history is that in which Samson sinks to the lowest, as rejected and bound by his own people; and then rises, through a wonderful victory, to be ruler amongst them. The Philistines, now thoroughly roused by the blows he has inflicted upon them, invade Judah with a host, and pitch in Lehi. The place is named, in anticipation, from the "jaw" which he uses to discomfit them; and it becomes to them a place of crushing defeat. But Judah is completely spiritless and cast down. Almost as much afraid of their

said, To [d]bind Samson are we come up: to do to him as he has done to us. And three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the cliff of Etam, and said unto Samson, [e]Knowest thou not that the Philistines are ruling over us? What is this that thou hast done to us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may give thee into the Philistines' hand. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me [f]yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, Nay, but we will bind thee fast, and give thee into their hands, but we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new [g]cords, and brought him up from the cliff. When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him. And the Spirit of Jehovah came suddenly upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax-threads that are burned in the fire, and his bands melted from off his hands. And he found the fresh [h]jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew with it a thousand men. And Samson said, With the jaw-bone of an ass I have made them asses; with the jaw-bone of an ass I have smitten a thousand men. And it came to pass when he had

[d] ch. 16. 21.
[e] ch. 13. 1. ch. 14. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 23.
[f] *cf.* Gen. 37. 26–28. Gal. 2.5,11–13.
[g] ch. 16. 11. *cf.* Gal.6.14.
[h] ch. 3. 31. *cf.* Nu. 6. 6. Nu. 19. 16.

God-sent deliverer as of the people under whom they are in bondage, they go down, to the number of three thousand, to the cleft of the rock of Etam, where he had withdrawn, as it would seem, just from such danger, to bind and deliver him into the enemy's hand. Things are thus with him at the lowest point, while, on the other hand, the grace on his part is beautiful. With the consciousness of divinely-given strength upon him, he cannot use it against the people whom he is called to deliver, but quietly submits to be bound in order to being handed over to the Philistines. It is Judah, the lion-tribe, which thus is seen in lowest humiliation.

When the Philistines shout in triumph, the Spirit of Jehovah once more comes upon Samson, and the new cords are but as flax in the fire: with one effort he is free. Once free, the jawbone of an ass arms him for the fight; and with this he slays a thousand men. He who had used before the mouth of a living ass to rebuke the madness of a prophet, uses now the jaw of a dead one as a weapon to defeat an army. The song of deliverance emphasizes this:—

"With the jaw of an ass I have made asses of them;*
With the jaw of an ass I have smitten a thousand men."

The ass is not, in Scripture, the expression of stupidity, as with us; but, generally, of intractability under the yoke: and so it seems here. The easy victory showed them to be rebellious to the yoke of divine sovereignty,—which, after all, it was bootless to resist. The mouth of the ass had rebuked the prophet, more stubborn than itself: his mouth had uttered rebellion, and by a beast's

* This seems the real force of the so-called paronomasia. The Hebrew, as now punctuated,—"*billechi hachamor chamor chamorathaim*,"—reads as in the margin of our common version, "a heap, two heaps," where the identity of words is altogether lost. The Septuagint, reading "*chamor chamartim*," translates ἐζαλείφων ἐζήλειψα αὐτούς, "I have destroyed them," the Vulgate following this with *delevi eos*. It might be rendered "with the jaw of the turbulent I have troubled them," giving the ass its ideal character, and preserving the connection between noun and verb. It seems to me, however, that, taking advantage of this, Samson uses the verb as more strictly synonymous with the noun, as above. The expression has the disadvantage with us of seeming mere vulgar coarseness, which it is not.

ceased speaking, that he cast the jaw-bone out of his hand, and he called that place Ramath-lehi.

And he was sore [t]athirst; and he called on Jehovah, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance by thy servant's hand; and now shall I die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? And God [j]clave the hollow that was in Lehi, and there came water out of it. And he drank, and his spirit came again, and he revived. Therefore its name was called En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.

And he [k]judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

*t* Ps. 63. 1.

*j* Ex. 17. 3-6 with ver. 8.

*k* ch. 12. 8, etc. ch. 16. 31. *ctr.* Acts 20. 18-35.

mouth was reproved. Here, where rebellion had been more open and utter, a beast's jawbone is used to smite it down. Here, indeed, is a folly that is made manifest to all.

He casts the instrument of destruction out of his hand, and calls the place the "Jawbone Height." The lesson is worthy of preservation in the name. But God, who cares for his poor servant, must make him realize his own need of the same lesson. The heat and fatigue of the encounter affect him with a mortal thirst; and he who had been dealing death to others realizes a danger from which his own hand is powerless to deliver him. He can only cry to Jehovah, and plead with Him His recent interposition on his behalf as argument for a new one. A good argument it is with the Unchangeable One, who is not a man that He should repent: yea, "with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning." The lesson, too, must be complete to *be* a lesson; and He who has just delivered Samson from the hands of the uncircumcised cannot possibly allow him now to fall into them. God, therefore, answers by cleaving the "Bruising place that is in Lehi," so that water comes out of it, and he revives. The likeness to the rock cleft in the wilderness can hardly—is surely not intended to—escape us. The cross and its results for us are needed to be held in constant remembrance; and the place of bruising—*machtesh*, the "mortar"—is not likely to make the reference here less plain. The connection with the scene that has just been before us is also evident: so plain that our common version speaks of it as the "hollow place"—"socket" it might mean—"that was in the jaw." That this is not right, the fact of its being "in Lehi unto this day" is sufficient witness: but the connection is also clear. And the bruising-place that is in Lehi reminds us surely of the Philistine defeat. Yet the spring of water is in marked contrast. Not by "bruising," but by *being* "bruised for our iniquity," did the Lord of glory bring forth living water for our death-faint souls; and here the soldiers of the cross find continually their admonition and refreshment. Here, too, is the secret of how alone Satan is bruised, and every enemy succumbs in turn. How necessary a lesson for God's Nazarites, if they are to know and preserve the secret of strength! Samson is now ready for the judgeship; and he judges Israel twenty years.

3. We now come to the final section of the story, in which we find a rapid descent on Samson's part to utter destruction, as far as he can accomplish it. Indeed, although recovered by divine grace, it is only by death that he breaks the bonds by which he has bound himself. His life goes out in one last victory, in which he perishes with the Philistines,—the link that he had forged with them still prevailing even over his recovered strength. While, on their part, as it has been ever with the enemies of the people of God, the victory of the Philistines over him becomes their worst defeat at last.

In this last section, Gaza, the place of their "strength," is the witness of their double defeat. The strength of God, which alone Samson's is, measures itself with that of the enemy, and prevails, spite of the mortal weakness found in the vessel of it. It is only thus the more manifested as divine; and in holiness

Nazarite-ship lost and recovered.

1. (*vv.* 1-3.) The warning of grace.

2. (*vv.* 4-22.) Facile steps to self-destruction.

(XVI.)

3. [1]And Samson went to Gaza, and saw a [l]harlot there, and went in to her. [And it was told] the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed [him] in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all night, saying, Until morning light! then we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and pulled them up with the bar, and put them upon his [m]shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the hill that faceth towards Hebron.

[2]And it came to pass afterward, that he [n]loved a

[l] *ctr.* Matt. 5. 27, 28. *cf.* Jas. 1. 27. Jas. 4. 4.

[m] ver. 30. *cf.* Jer. 9. 23, 24.

[n] ch. 14. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 11. 1, etc.

also against sin wherever found: the lust which is the lawlessness of a heart away from God, and the pride which would pervert His grace into a shelter for such license.

(i.) In the first part of what we have here,—the divine gift of strength in Samson, so far from being recalled, is displayed in a way so signal as at first sight to obscure the evidence of the decline which has begun, and which is so soon to make itself disastrously apparent. For the moment he gains another brilliant triumph, as would appear, in the very presence of the enemy, appalled to utter inaction by the contemptuous daring of the Israelite. He walks into the place of strength, and breaks his way out of it again, leaving it dismantled, like a conquered city. He carries the gates in a direction pointing significantly enough toward Israelitish territory; and then drops them, with equal insult, where they can find them,—as if, after all, there were no need to deprive them of defenses so insignificant as they had proved. Even the moral decline which his presence there had demonstrated, and which (whatever their heathen manners might be), they could realize, no doubt, in a follower of Jehovah, seemed to have no effect in diminishing that wonderful strength which had long before carried shame and ruin into the midst of their broken ranks. All this, for them, was a warning they would have done well to listen to, and did not; and the last blow came upon them unawares.

But for Samson, also, there was a warning to which he listened no more than they. True, God had not left him to the consequences of his pride and lust, and the strength of the Nazarite had not deserted him. But while he had splendidly insulted the enemy, he had not harmed him; and the strength which should have delivered Israel had, in this case, been put forth only to deliver himself. *He* had been forced to flee, and not the Philistines. He had shown his strength, but gained no dignity. As between them and him God might still act for him, help him to escape by night even from the house of shame which he had entered, was there no warning for him as to that besetting sin of his which might yet make this gateless Gaza a steel trap to hold him? Oh, that he had heard! Oh, that men *did* hear!

From the first, the snare for the Nazarite had been a Philistine alliance. Then he had openly, and, in a sense, honorably, courted it. It was to be a *marriage*. The matured man seeks this no more; but alas, cannot restrain his *lusts*, though plainly unlawful. He can no more *vindicate* indulgence, but he can *yield* to it. How often is this, too, to-day the pit into which fall God's Nazarite strong men! Principles with which open alliance is refused are toyed with, and courted dishonorably, embraced and thrown off at will. Yet, for a while strength may still be shown and exploits done, the enemy's stronghold be dismantled, and the gates carried away to an indefinite somewhere, facing toward Hebron. This they never reach, nor do we find there Samson either.

(ii.) Grace resisted hardens the heart, and Samson, with his lesson all unlearned, is found now in the vale of Sorek, "entanglement?" No strong

woman in the valley of Sorek, and her name was Delilah. And the princes of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, [o]Persuade him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and how we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to subdue him, and we will [p]give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver. And Delilah said unto Samson, Tell me now wherein thy great strength lies, and wherewith thou must be bound to subdue thee. And Samson said unto her, [q]If they were to bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then should I be weak, and be as another man. Then the princes of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now she had liers in wait abiding in the chamber; and she said unto him, Philistines are upon thee, Samson! And he brake the cords as a thread of tow is broken at the breath of fire; and his strength was not known.

And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and spoken lies to me: tell me now, I pray thee, wherewith thou mayest be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me with new ropes wherewith no work has been done, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. And Delilah took new ropes, and bound him with them, and said unto him, Philistines upon thee, Samson! And there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them off his arms like a thread.

And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and spoken lies to me: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou shouldst weave with the web the seven locks of my head. And she fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, Philistines upon thee, Samson! And he awoke out of His sleep, and tore out the pin of the loom and the web.

And she said unto him, [r]How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me? These three times thou hast mocked me, and not told me wherein is thy great strength. And so it was, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so that his soul was vexed to death, that he [s]told her all his heart, and said unto her, No razor hath come upon my head; for I am a [t]Nazarite of God from my mother's womb: if I were shaved, then my strength would go from me,

o ch. 14. 15. Nu. 25. 18. Prov. 2. 16–19. 1 Jno. 2. 15, 16.

p Nu. 22. 7. *cf.* ch. 17. 2. *ctr.* ch. 15. 6.

q *cf.* Prov. 5. 3–13. Jas. 1. 13–16. *ctr.* Matt. 4. 1–11.

r ch. 14. 16. 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.

s Mi. 7. 5. *ctr.* Jno. 4. 29. 1 Ki. 10. 2.

t ch. 13. 5.

city is here to keep him in,—nothing but a weak woman's arms, and they are stronger than the gates of Gaza. Delilah means "exhausted, weak"; and it is by that which appears to us such we are often overcome: for in this respect, at least, we credit ourselves with strength, and do not find it. The blindness induced by sin is wonderful, and Samson here wonderfully illustrates it. He takes one step after another, drawing nearer and nearer to the precipice into which at last he plunges recklessly. Each step taken makes the next easier.

and I should be weak, and be like all mankind. And Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, and she sent and called the princes of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once; for he has shown me [u]all his heart. Then the princes of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hand. And she made him [v]sleep upon her knees, and called a man, and she shaved off the seven locks of his head: and she began to subdue him, and his strength went from him. And she said, Philistines upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, [w]I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself free. And he [x]knew not that Jehovah had departed from him. And the Philistines seized him, and [y]put out his eyes, and brought him down to [z]Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass, and he had to [a]grind in the prison-house.

3. (*vv.* 23-31.) The recovery: God manifesting Himself thus against Dagon.

[3] And the hair of his head began to [b]grow again after he was shaven. And the princes of the Philistines gathered themselves together to offer a great sacrifice unto [c]Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath given Samson our enemy into our hands. And when the people saw him they praised their god: for they said, Our [d]god hath given into our hands our enemy and the devastator of our land, who multiplied our slain. And it came to pass when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call Samson, that he may make us [e]sport. And they called Samson out of the prison-house, and he made them sport; and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Let me alone, that I may touch the pillars upon which the house standeth, that I may lean on them. Now the house was full of men and women, and all the princes of the Philistines were there, and there were on the roof about three thousand men and women, who were looking on while Samson

*u* vers. 7,11, 13.
*v* ver. 14. *cf.* Prov. 6. 9-11. Rom. 13.11 -14.
*w ctr.* 1 Chr. 14. 10, 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 10 with Phil. 3. 3.
*x cf.* Ex. 34. 29. 1 Sam. 16. 14.
*y cf.* Gen. 27. 1 with 2 Pet.1.5-9. *ctr.* Deut. 34. 7 with Acts 7. 55, 56.
*z cf.* ch. 16. 1 with Gal. 6. 7.
*a ctr.* ch. 15. 5. *cf.* Deut. 28. 47, 48.
*b cf.* Gal. 6.1. Matt. 26. 75 with Jno. 21. 15-17.
*c* 1 Sam. 5.2. 1 Chr. 10. 9, 10. *ctr.* Col. 2. 15.
*d* Dan. 5. 4. *cf.* Nu. 14. 13-16 with Rom. 2. 24.
*e cf.* 2 Sam. 2. 14, 16. Heb. 11.36.

With each his eyes are more completely sealed. Then, when his ruin is complete, he is unconscious of it until the consequences overtake him. The details are here exceptionally hard to translate into spiritual meaning, while we need not be less assured that such there is all through. On the other hand, it scarcely needs to moralize where moralizing is so easy. Such is the fatal power,—the hardening through the deceitfulness of sin!

(iii.) The Philistines make it the triumph of their god that Samson is delivered into their hands, and thus it is needful that Jehovah manifest Himself. Samson also, blinded, begins to see more clearly than when the lust of his eyes enthralled him. His bonds set him free; his darkness enlightens him. The goodness of God it is that thus leaves His people to the consequences of their sins, that the bitter fruit may condemn the tree; and they may, by experience, however painfully, find fellowship with Him. How much better, indeed, to learn by His word through faith! And this should be our profit from these sad and shameful histories. Still, if the Father's chastenings are needed, it is what must not be denied us: "He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."

The application made by some of this history of Samson to the Lord seems too

made sport. And Samson called unto Jehovah, and said, Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and [f]make me strong, I pray thee, only this once, O God! that I may take one vengeance upon the Philistines for my two eyes! And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood—for he supported himself upon them—one with his right hand and the other with his left; and Samson said, Let *me* die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with might: and the house fell upon the princes, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew in his [g]death were more than those that he slew in his life. And his brethren and all his father's house came down and took him, and brought him up, and [h]buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the sepulchre of Manoah his father. And he had [i]judged Israel twenty years.

[f] ch. 14. 6. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.
[g] *ctr.* Josh. 24. 30.
[h] *ctr.* ch. 8. 28, 32. 2 Tim. 4. 6–8.
[i] ch. 15. 20. *ctr.* Ps. 72.

## DIVISION 3. (Chap. xvii.–xxi.)

*The corruption at heart manifest.*

### SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xvii.–xviii.)

*Godward: will-worship in the typical "judge"* (Dan).

(XVII.)

Its beginning, in the individual.

1. (*vv.* 1–4.) First origin.

1. [1]AND there was a man of Mount [j]Ephraim, whose name was Micajehu. And he said to his mother: The [k]eleven hundred silver-pieces which were taken from thee, and about which thou cursedst, and

[j] ch. 19. 1.
[k] ch. 16. 5.

partial, too much contradicted by other parts, too little in harmony with the character of the book, and with its place in the book, to be accepted with any satisfaction. Partial applications of this nature are easy to be made, but tend to confusion of all interpretation, and have been the reproach of the allegorical, especially. Even although we can put nothing better in their place, it becomes our duty to reject them in the interest of clear and consistent exposition of the word of God. The close of Samson's history is a most solemn one; and, at the end of this series of declensions and revivals, comes in a most solemn place. We must leave it for the prayerful examination of the Lord's people, and as what calls for exercise of heart as well as for searching of Scripture. To introduce here a representation of the Lord's blessed work would seem to take the edge from the admonition it should convey to us, if at least this should be assumed to be the real object here of the Spirit of God. If it be simply meant as the *suggestion* by the history of the failed Nazarite of that true and perfect One who alone has never failed, this is no longer typical interpretation, and does not fall within the compass of these brief outline notes.

DIV. 3.

We have now reached the last division of the book, in which we have the revelation of the internal condition of the people, Godward and manward,—the clear illumination of the whole history. For this, therefore, we go back before the history; for of this it is not the consequence, but the cause, and an abiding cause: for the Danite idolatry lasts, as we are told, quite through the whole period of the book. Not that this, by itself, is anything more than a sample of the state in general, having just its significance in this—that it is but a sample.

spakest in mine ears also: behold, the silver is with me: I [l]took it. And his mother said, Blessed of Jehovah be my son! And when he restored the one thousand one hundred pieces to his mother, his mother said, I had verily [m]dedicated the silver to Jehovah from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. But

[l] Ex. 20. 15.

[m] *ctr.* Nu. 31. 48–54.

Another thing is manifested in connection with this—the need of a king. Men are, indeed, very far from doing even what is *right* in their own eyes; but to do this also is not enough. Give man a law, he cannot be trusted as to the interpretation of the law. It needs that there should be one apart from the influence of private ends and motives, to interpret for him, as well as with power adequate to the enforcement of the interpretation. This shows us how the book of Judges prepares the way for those of Kings; although in these, also, it is soon evident that among all that follow, the best are but the shadows of the true King, for whom all creation waits. Thus history becomes prophecy, and Messianic: for the longing born of the Spirit must have its accomplishment, and the "Desire of all nations" come. The Old Testament is but an unfinished and broken utterance apart from the New,—a witness to its own utter barrenness.

Yet though Christ has come, we are still typically in the days of Judges merely, as we have seen, and the want of a king is not less manifest now than then. Even Christianity has no perfection apart from the personal presence of Him whom it has made necessary to us. If the light has brightened—how much!—since those Old Testament days, the shadows, too, have darkened. We, too, that have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the manifestation of the power to be put forth when He who is to come shall come, and change our bodies into the likeness of His glorious body, and take the whole world into His almighty new-creative hands. "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

SUBD. 1.

The witness to man's condition here is, as commonly, a double one; and as the second table of the law is based upon the first, it is with the first that we must begin. The idolatry in Dan precedes in moral order, probably historically also, the Benjamite war, though the latter was early, for Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was then high priest. On the other hand, the seizure of Laish or Leshem by the Danites is given in the book of Joshua (xix. 47). It is quite plain, therefore, that we have thus a new beginning, all the more significant as looked back to from the end, as God will one day require again the things that are past.

(i.) The idolatry in Dan is not original with them, but the transplanting of a sin begun in the house of a man no way prominent, as it would seem, in Israel. Leprosy will spread, in whatever member of a body it begins; and none may think himself too little or mean to become a propagator of disease that may infect a nation. There is, moreover, in sin a power of real and rapid evolution, a transmutability of species such as that it is certain that from one covetous act in Eden all the myriad forms of wickedness with which the world is filled to-day have been derived. Traced to its origin, as the Spirit of God would trace it for our profit, we have first a man's theft from his mother of eleven hundred silver pieces, which, terrified by her curses, but without any repentance toward God, he restores. Apparently on the impulse of the moment, soon regretted, she dedicates it to Jehovah for a purpose absolutely forbidden by Him, to which finally she applies less than a fifth part. It is the old sin of the wilderness that she repeats, a founder making of it a graven image and a molten image, and she solemnly passes them over from her hand for her son to Jehovah, making no doubt of the acceptability of this to Him.

he restored the silver unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred silver-pieces and gave them unto the founder, who made of it a graven [n]image and a molten image, and it was in the house of Micajehu.

2. (*vv.* 5-13.) Levite for priest.

[2] And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod and teraphim, and he consecrated one of his [o]sons, and he became his priest. In [p]those days there was no king in Israel: a man did what was right in his own eyes. And there was a young man out of [q]Bethlehem-Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a [r]Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man went out of the city, out of Bethlehem-judah, to sojourn where he might find [a place]; and as he journeyed he came to Mount Ephraim, as far as the house of Micah. And

*n* Ex. 20. 4.

*o* Num. 17. 1-11. Heb. 5. 4.

*p* ch. 18. 1. ch. 21. 25.

*q* ch. 19. 1, 2.

*r* Deut. 12. 12, etc.

Thus she is doing what is right in her own eyes, evidently; though of any movement of her heart to God there is not a trace. To make his own god and have it is the natural desire everywhere of the human heart away from Him. We need not use as much silver as did the woman here to make one. We may be less ignorant or more indifferent, possibly both; but will-worship is everywhere essentially of the same pattern. This is why the case before us is so instructive to us.

Morality and religion are sundered by superstition. The brigand has his crucifix and his rosary, and is still a brigand. "Nowhere is the Virgin more fervently adored than in the prisons [of Italy] by the malefactors and camorristi. The first demand made of a new-comer, immediately on his entry into the cells, is for a penny to furnish oil for the Virgin's lamp." This was the style of devotion of the mother of Micah, and the stream will rise no higher than its source. The man adopts his mother's religion, and the change is indicated in the clipping of his name, which, from Micajehu ("who is like Jehovah?") becomes Micah simply, meaning, probably, "who is dull of sight?"

Dull of sight he is, assuredly, keenly looking after his own interest all the while, for what more profitable than a god of your own manufacture and in your own possession? And all this takes place not in some remote corner of even the little Israelitish land, but in Mount Ephraim, quite near to Shiloh, where was the ark of God. Just so the golden calf was made under the shadow of Mount Sinai: for distance from God cannot be measured by latitude and longitude; heathenism is not the sigh of a heart that says, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" No; it was "when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened,"—which is just the transformation of a Micajehu into Micah.

Mount Ephraim is the place where Micah dwells, as it is the home of the Levite also in the story that follows this. It is in the practical life that diseases of this kind break out. We have seen the pride of Ephraim already developing itself in relation to Gideon and to Jephthah. Afterwards the rival kingdoms are a more enduring memorial of it, and Jeroboam's calf-worship is established close upon its border. Even true fruitfulness has its danger in this direction, and pride and idolatry are never far apart. We do not know the forms of Micah's idols: no doubt this is left vague, as unimportant: what matter *what* supplants God in the heart?—the evil is only that He *is* supplanted.

(ii.) Yet there is development: the thing is a living germ that grows. Micah with his gods must have his *house* of gods. Then he must have his ephod and his priest, and his gods themselves must be supplemented with the teraphim. All this was still "right" in Micah's eyes. When we are thus committed to the guidance of our own minds, quite a system may be easily elaborated; the

Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find [a place]. And Micah said unto him, Abide with me, and be unto me a father and a [s]priest; and I will [t]give thee ten pieces of silver by the year, and a suit of clothes, and thy sustenance. So the Levite went in. And the Levite consented to dwell with the man; and the young man became to him like one of his own sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest and was in Micah's house. And Micah said, [u]Now I know that Jehovah will do me good, because a Levite hath become my priest.

(XVIII.)

The extension of idolatry to Dan. 1. (1-12.) The spies.

2. [1]In [v]those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for themselves an [w]inheritance to dwell in; for to that day [their lot]

[s] *cf.* ch. 18. 19. *ctr.* Nu. 8. 19.

[t] *cf.* Nu. 18. 21–24. *ctr.* 1 Pet. 5. 2.

[u] *cf.* ver. 5. Num. 4. 15.

[v] ch. 17. 6. ch. 19. 1.

[w] *cf.* ch. 1. 34–36. Josh. 17. 14–18.

further we advance, the more completely do we get astray. How careful need we to be as to beginnings!

The matter of priesthood troubles him. He first consecrates one of his sons to be his priest, but he is uneasy about it: some reminiscence of the law will not allow him peace. Strange that we find nothing to indicate any alarm of conscience about his rival tabernacle, or even about his carved and molten gods! And we often find this strange anomaly among men. Conscience may be alive and sensitive upon certain points, when upon others it seems dead or paralyzed. And it is often the minor thing to which it is sensitive, while to the greater it yields no response. Nor is this limited to unbelievers either, but the same thing is found among those that are truly the Lord's. In this case, however, as with Micah, it is generally the case that the awakened soul is easily quieted again, and with some half-truth which is but the perversion of truth. A Levite becomes his priest: and now he is radiant with satisfaction, and knows assuredly that Jehovah will do him good!

The Levite himself is another sign of the times. He is of the Levites of Judah, has been for a while in Bethlehem-judah, and wandered away again to find where he may another temporary resting-place. His is the restless foot of a stranger where he might have claimed inheritance, and he is ready to find a home where he should have been a stranger. Little solicitation prevails with him: his sustenance, a suit of clothes, a salary, has prevailed with many in all ages of the world, and the Levite exchanges his ministry for priesthood in the house of Micah, where the idolatry of the place is sanctified with Jehovah's name. All this is simple enough to read by those that care, and Christendom has exhibited every detail of this transformation,—not, alas, as it would seem, a long process: a manufactured priesthood for manufactured gods, all covered with a fair name of orthodoxy, and men doing with great satisfaction what is right in their own eyes!

(2.) And the evil does not stop with this. We are now to see how the private sin becomes a public sin, and roots itself in a tribe of Israel. The tribe of Dan we have seen long since as linked in Jacob's prophecy with apostasy. Dan is the typical judge, and it is here the failure begins, and is so disastrous. With Samson's failure the book ends; but here we see the Danite, from the first and all through, a failure. No tribe so signally fails to lay hold on its inheritance; and this is the only way in which we can understand that their lot had not fallen to them. They had suffered the Philistines to regain the cities upon the sea-coast, and the Amorites had forced them into the mountains. This loss of what is our own, and should be made our own, is often the reason of much restless activity

had not fallen to them for inheritance among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men of their whole number, men of valor, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to [x]spy out the land and search it. And they said unto them, Go and search the land. And they came to Mount Ephraim, as far as the house of Micah, and lodged there. When they were near the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite, and turned in there, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what art thou doing in this place? and what hast thou here? And he said unto them, Thus and thus hath Micah done to me; and he hath hired me, and I am his priest. And they said unto him, [y]Inquire, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether the way in which we go shall prosper. And the priest said unto them, [z]Go in peace: straight before Jehovah is the way in which ye go.

And the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, that they dwelt confidently after the manner of the Zidonians, [a]quiet and secure, and there was no one in the land who possessed power to put them to shame in anything; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any men. And they came unto their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol; and their brethren said unto them, What [say] ye? And they said, [b]Arise, and let us go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is exceeding good: and are ye still? Be not slothful to go and enter in, to possess the land. When ye go, ye will come to a people secure, and the land roomy on both sides: for God hath given it into your hands,—a place where there is no want of anything on earth.

[x] Nu. 13. 2. Deut. 1. 22. Josh. 2. 1. ch. 1. 23.

[y] 1 Ki. 22. 5, etc. Hos. 4. 12.

[z] *cf.* 2 Chr. 18. 5.

[a] vers. 10, 27.

[b] *cf.* Nu. 13. 30.

among the people of God, and of much that looks like success in other directions. Their history, as far as their original possession is concerned, clings around Zorah and Eshtaol, significant names when cut off from the rest that God had allotted them. They are here seen forced by their own slothfulness or timidity to seek an inheritance elsewhere; and were then as violent and rapacious as before they were indolent. Human nature in fallen man commonly shows itself in extremes of this kind.

From Zorah and Eshtaol they send out spies to search the land. Refusing God's choice for us we have, of course, to search out for ourselves. This becomes a snare to them by means of Micah's images: the path that is not with God is always exposed to Satan's ambushes.

Micah finds his judgment also through the Levite who was to be the means of blessing to him from Jehovah. The wandering Levite had been known to these wandering Danites, and they learn from him all about his present employment. He is not ashamed to speak of his hired priesthood, and they are quite ready to consult his oracle. They get the usual ambiguous response, which they interpret according to their own desires: but the end of this is not yet.

So the five men come to Laish, and here find the opportunity they seek. The Canaanites are living quiet and secure, in lawless self-indulgence, which shows them ripe for the judgment of God. They are evidently an easy prey; and they

And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and Eshtaol, six hundred men girt with weapons of war. And they went up and encamped at Kirjath-jearim in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day; behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.

2. (*vv.*13-26.) The robbery of the images.

2 And they passed from thence to Mount Ephraim, and came to the [c]house of Micah. Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Know ye that in these houses are an ephod and teraphim and a graven and a molten image? now, then, consider what ye shall do. And they turned aside thither, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, the house of Micah, and asked him of his welfare. And the six hundred men who were of the children of Dan, girt with their weapons of war, stood beside the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, came in thither, [and] [d]took the graven image and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image. And the priest took his stand at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men girt with weapons of war. And when these went into Micah's house and took the graven image, the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image, the priest said unto them, What are ye doing? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace; lay thy hand upon thy mouth, and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it [e]better for thee to be a priest to one man's house, or to be priest to a tribe and family in Israel? And the priest's heart was [f]glad; and he took the ephod and the teraphim and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people. And they turned and departed, and put the [g]little ones and the cattle and the goods before them. When they were a good way from

c ver. 2.

d *cf.* Gen. 31. 19, 34.

e *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 12, 13. Eph. 4. 11-13.

f *cf.* ch. 17. 11.

g *cf.* Gen. 32. 22, 23.

return with the good news to their expectant brethren. God's good news they would have it; for we see with keen eyes the sins of others, and pronounce God's judgments readily enough. Self-interest and self-flattery are potent in begetting a kind of religion; and the spies talk piously and fervently to their brethren. Soon there is a little army assembled at Kirjath-jearim, the forest city, which gives its suited character to the "Camp of Dan."

(ii.) The six hundred follow the road taken by the spies, and come to the house of Micah; and here the union of superstition with immorality once more manifests itself in a startling way. The spies recall their visit to the Levite, and the opportunity of securing the images for themselves seems to them all too favorable to let pass. Gods so helpless and so beneficent, whose virtue they perhaps supposed they had already proved,—for in idolatry it is vain to deny an efficacy attributed to the image, and thus the superiority of this to that Madonna, although as *representations* they are all the same. But blindness here is absolute: "they that make them are like unto them," says the inspired Word; "so is every one that trusteth in them."

The hireling priest shows himself but a hireling. A greater personal advantage to himself outweighs at once all obligations to his employer, and he is "glad" of the robbery by which he is to benefit. For the Danites, as with other sacer-

the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses beside Micah's house were gathered together and overtook the children of Dan. And they turned their faces and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken my gods which [h]I have made, and the priest, and are gone, and what have I more? how is it, then, that ye say to me, What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry men run upon you, and thou lose thy [i]life and the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way; and Micah saw that they were too strong for him, and he turned and went back to his house.

h ch. 17. 4, 5. Deut. 31. 29.

i *cf.* Ezek. 8. 17.

3. (*vv.* 27-31.) The seizure of Laish, and the idolatry set up.

[3] And they took what Micah had made, and the priest that he had, and came upon Laish, upon a people quiet and secure, and [j]smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And they had no deliverer: for it was far from Zidon, and they had no [k]business with any man. And it was in the valley which [reacheth] to Beth-rehob: and they built the city, and dwelt in it. And they called the name of the city [l]Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

j ver. 10.

k ver. 7.

l Josh. 19. 47. *cf.* Gen. 14. 14.

And the children of Dan set up for themselves the graven [m]image: and Jonathan, the son of [n]Gershom, the son of [o]Moses, he and his sons were priests unto the tribe of the Danites until the day of the [p]captivity of the land. And they set up for themselves Micah's image that he made, [q]all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

m *cf.* 1 Ki. 12. 28, 29.

n Ex. 2. 22.

o *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 1-3.

p 1 Sam. 4. 11, 21, 22. 1 Sam. 6. 1 with Ps. 78. 60, 61.

q Josh. 18. 1.

dotalists to-day, it is not necessary to respect the man who by reason of his office is supposed to have the ear of God. Once again, morality is divorced from religion, and He is not glorified but dishonored in those that draw near to Him.

Little comment, surely, is needed here. The gainers have lost; the loser, if he knows it, has gained. The Danites depart with their booty in peace.

(iii.) The third part shows us, briefly, the end of this sad story. The surprise of Laish is complete; and the Canaanites, doomed of God before, are cut off. Laish becomes Dan. But there the idolatrous system begun by Micah is established, and abides till the captivity of the land; that is, as we are informed, as long as the house of God continued at Shiloh. When the ark went into captivity among the Philistines, the sanctuary at Shiloh came to an end (Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61); and with the reformation under Samuel, the idolatry under Dan was no doubt swept away.

But now we have revealed one of the saddest proofs of the decline in Israel that had already taken place. The name of the Levite priest is Jonathan ("Jehovah hath given,") the son of Gershom, the son of *Moses:* scarcely the grandson, but certainly a descendant not far removed, of the great lawgiver. Of this and not Manasseh, as the true reading, there is no doubt. Only respect for so honored a name as that of Moses induced the alteration,—the "n" alone needed for it being suspended also over, rather than written in the word. "The significance of the statement," as Cassel observes, "lies in the contrast between descendant and ancestor." So early and grave was the degeneracy of the people.

SUBDIVISION 2. (Chap. xix.–xxi.)

*Breach between man and man: the Benjamite war.*

(XIX.)

Lawless lust.

1. AND in those days there was [r]no king in Israel; and there was a certain Levite who sojourned on the far side of Mount [s]Ephraim, and he took himself a [t]concubine out of [u]Bethlehem-judah. And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him to her father's house, to Bethlehem-judah, and was there the space of four months. And her husband rose up and went after her to speak kindly to her, to [v]bring her back, and his servant was with him, and a couple of asses. And she brought him to her father's house; and when the damsel's father saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him, and he [w]abode with him three days: so they ate and drank and lodged there. And it came to pass, on the fourth day, when they rose up early in the morning, that he arose to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, [x]Refresh thy heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward ye shall go your way. And they sat down and ate and drank both of them together. And the damsel's father said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and [y]pass the night, and let thy heart be glad. And the man rose up to depart; but his father-in-law urged him, and he lodged there again. And he rose up early in the morning of the fifth day to depart, and the damsel's father said, Refresh thy heart, I pray thee; and they tarried till the day declined; and they ate, both of them. And the man rose up to go, he and his con-

r ch. 18. 1. ch. 21. 25.
s ch. 17. 1.
t *cf.* ch. 8. 31.
u ch. 17. 9.
v *cf.* Jer. 3. 1.
w *ctr.* Gen. 24. 55, 56.
x *cf.* 1 Ki. 13. 15, 16.
y *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 1.

SUBD. 2.

We now come to the sins against the second table of the law. The breach with God sunders all links at once, and the whole framework of society shows itself as ready to fall to pieces. The story here is a sickening one; and if it is thus given us in detail, there must be corresponding need on our part. It does not follow that it will furnish proportionate material for such notes as these, the lesson being so strictly a moral one, and needing so little an interpreter. But what a world is this, in which such scenes can be! The thing we need is to trace them to their root, and let the shock which they produce make us cling close to those paternal arms, which, circling us all, alone can hold us fast to one another.

We hear once more of Mount Ephraim and of Bethlehem-judah: the figure of a Levite is again prominent, and not with honor; but the place of Laish is now filled by Gibeah, and the tribe connected with it in shame is not Dan but Benjamin. But all Israel is here, in one way or other, involved; and the shadow left upon the people is a dark and terrible one.

1. We have first the account of the awful deed at Gibeah. The Levite and his concubine are evidently intended to convey to us the general laxity. The woman is hardly lighter than the man. The five days of eating and drinking at Bethlehem have their moral significance: then the departure, when too late; the notice of Jerusalem as a Jebusite city, twice apparently recovered out of the hands of the Israelites, and Judæans and Benjamites having been driven out from their partial hold upon it. It is now a city of the stranger; but no more strange than

cubine and his servant; and his father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now, the day draweth toward [z]evening, tarry the night, I pray you: behold, the day declineth, tarry the night here, and let thy heart be glad; and to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go to thy tent. But the man would not stay the night, and rose up and departed, and came over against [a]Jebus, that is, Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, and his concubine was with him.

They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn aside to this city of the Jebusites, and tarry the night there. And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside to the city of the [b]stranger, that is not of the children of Israel, but we will pass over to [c]Gibeah. And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places, and we will stay the night in Gibeah or in Ramah. And they passed on and went their way, and the [d]sun went down on them [when they were] by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. And they turned aside thither to go and lodge the night in Gibeah. And he went in, and sat him down in the open place of the city: for there was [e]no one who took them into his house to pass the night.

And behold, an old man came from his work out of the field at even, and the man was of Mount [f]Ephraim, and himself sojourned in Gibeah; but the men of the place were Benjamites. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the wayfarer in the open place of the city; and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehem-judah toward the further side of Mount Ephraim: from thence am I; and I went unto Bethlehem-judah, and I am going to the [g]house of Jehovah; but there is not a man to receive me into his house. Yet we have both straw and provender for our asses, and I have bread and wine also for me and for thy handmaid, and for the young man who is with thy servants: there is no lack of anything. And the old man answered, Peace be to thee, but let thy needs be on me: only [h]lodge not in the open place. And he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and ate and

z *cf.* Eph. 5. 11.

a Josh. 18. 28.

b *cf.* Deut. 17. 15. 2 Cor. 11. 26.

c *cf.* 1 Sam. 10. 26.

d *cf.* Eph. 4. 26.

e *cf.* ver. 12.

f ver. 1.

g ch. 18. 31.

h Gen. 19. 2.

Gibeah of Benjamin, with its ominous lack of common hospitality. The one who receives them at last is an Ephraimite; and touched, perhaps, by the recognition of one from his own locality. His Levite character seems not to be in the traveler's mind,*—though he is afraid, as well he might be, of the Canaanite city.

* Except with Kell and Cassel we translate verse 18, "I walk at the house of Jehovah," that is, "my walk in life" is there. But few accept this, however, and the expression seems a strange one. On the other hand, the mention of the house of Jehovah at all seems strange also, as he was simply going home. If he speaks of his calling, however, it seems mere wounded dignity.

drank. While they were making their hearts merry, behold, men of the city, sons of Belial, surrounded the house, beating at the door, and they spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, [i]Bring out the man that came into thy house, that we may know him. And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, Nay, my brethren, I pray you, do not wickedly, seeing this man is come into my house; do not this folly. Behold, my [j]daughter, a virgin, and his concubine, them will I bring out now, and humble them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you; but unto this man do not so vile a thing. But the men would not hearken unto him; so the man took his concubine, and brought her out unto them: and they knew her and abused her all the night until the morning; and when the morning-dawn arose, they let her go. And the woman came at the dawning of the day, and fell down at the entrance of the man's house where her [k]lord was, till it was light. And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the door of the house, and went out to go his way; and, behold, there lay the woman, his concubine, at the entrance of the house, and her hands upon the threshold. And he said unto her, Rise, and let us be going: but no one answered. And he took her up upon the ass; and the man rose up and went unto his place. And when he came unto his house, he took a [l]knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, according to her bones, and sent her into all the country of Israel. And it was so, that all that saw it said, There hath been no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt to this day! Set it before you, consult, and speak!

[i] Gen. 19. 4-6. Lev. 20. 13.

[j] Gen. 19. 8.

[k] *ctr.* Eph. 5. 25-30.

[l] 1 Sam. 11. 7.

(XX.)

The war. 2. And [m]all the children of Israel went out, and the assembly was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto Jehovah in [n]Mizpeh. And the heads of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the con-

[m] Josh. 22. 12, etc. *cf.* 1 Cor. 12. 26.

[n] ch. 21. 1. 1 Sam. 7. 5.

There follows the horrible outbreak, which makes him realize that the Israelite city is as bad as any Canaanite one. All through it is a repetition of the Sodomite outrage, but without the angel-guard that insured things there. The old man, their host, repeats Lot's offer. The Levite, for his own safety's sake, abandons his concubine to the insane fury of the crowd. The morning finds her dead, with her hands stretched, imploring and in vain, over the violated threshold.

Then comes the call for judgment,—itself brutal, and effective in its brutality. The doubly dishonored body makes its own ghastly appeal, and all Israel is summoned to give its answer.

2. And not in vain is the summons. Israel gather, by their representatives, from Dan to Beersheba, save only the tribe involved, and the Levite at Mizpeh recounts the awful story,—reticent, naturally, however, as to his own part in it. The people respond with prompt determination, and all the men of Israel are gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

gregation of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. And the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh. And the children of Israel said, Tell us how did this wickedness take place? And the man, the Levite, the husband of the woman that was murdered, answered and said, [o]I came to Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. And the lords of Gibeah rose up against me, and beset the house round about against me, by night. Me they meant to slay, and my concubine they humbled, and she died. And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout the country of Israel's inheritance: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold now, ye are all children of Israel: deliberate and give here your counsel. And all the people arose as one man, saying, [p]We will not go any of us to his tent, nor will we turn any of us to his house, but now this shall be what we will do to Gibeah; we will go against it by lot, and take ten men out of the hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred out of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, (taking victual for the people,) that they may do, when they come to Geba of Benjamin, according to all the folly they have wrought in Israel. So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, [q]knit together as one man.

And the tribes of Israel sent men throughout all the tribe of [r]Benjamin, saying, What is this wickedness that hath been done among you? Now, then, [s]give up the men, the sons of Belial, who are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin [t]would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel; and the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to [u]battle against the children of Israel. And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities, twenty-six thousand men that drew sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who were numbered seven hundred chosen men. Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men [v]left-handed: all these slang stones to a hair['s breadth] and would not miss. And the men of Israel besides Benjamin were numbered [w]four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war.

o ch. 19. 16.

p *cf.* Deut. 13. 12–16 with 1 Cor. 5. 1–5.

q *ctr.* Col. 2. 2, 19.

r *cf.* Josh. 7. 16 with Deut. 29. 18.

s *cf.* 2 Sam. 20. 15–22.

t *cf.* 1 Cor. 5. 6, 7. 2 Jno. 10 with Lev. 14. 33–47.

u *cf.* 1 Cor. 5, 2.

v ch. 3. 15.

w *ctr.* ch. 7. 2, 4, 7. *cf.* 2 Sam 17. 11, 12.

But Benjamin refuses the appeal to them, and gathers to the defense of Gibeah with sullen resolution. They are practiced warriors, and seem to build upon it, though but little more than a fifteenth part of the combined forces opposed. Israel has, too, the house of God; and it is not a moment doubtful on which side He will be. How fearful must be, then, the condition of those that can thus fling themselves into the adverse ranks!

And the children of Israel arose and went up to Bethel, and [x]inquired of God, and said, Which of us shall go up [y]first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And Jehovah said, Judah first. And the children of Israel rose up in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin: and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and [z]destroyed to the ground of Israel that day twenty-two thousand men. And the people, the men of Israel, [a]took courage, and set their battle again in array where they had put themselves in array the first day. And the children of Israel went up and [b]wept before Jehovah until even, and inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And Jehovah said, Go up against him. And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the [c]second day. And Benjamin went forth to meet them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed again to the ground of the children of Israel eighteen thousand men: all these drew the sword.

Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up and came to Bethel, and wept, and abode there before Jehovah, and [d]fasted that day until even, and offered up [e]burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before Jehovah. And the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah (now the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, and [f]Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother, or shall I cease? And Jehovah said, Go up; for to-morrow I will [g]give them into thy hand.

And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. And

*x* 1 Sam. 30. 8.
*y* ch. 1. 1, 2.
*z* Josh. 7. 4.
*a cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 8, 9. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 30. 6.
*b* 1Sam.30.4.
*c cf.* Jno. 15. 5.
*d* 1 Sam.7.6.
*e* 1 Sam.7. 9. ch. 2. 4, 5.
*f ctr.* Num. 25. 7, 8
*g* ch. 7. 9.

The united people, on the other hand, do not neglect to consult the divine oracle. They inquire as to who shall lead on the attack upon Benjamin, and are answered, "Judah shall be first." But to be fit to be used of God to deal with evil involves much more than readiness to be His instrument. They are *too ready*, as we see in the result. Their wrath is too prompt, too implacable, too unsparing. Theirs is the reckless haste of vengeance, and not the solemn discrimination of divine judgment. They remember not their own sins, bring no sin-offering to God, no tears of penitence. They build on their numbers; no doubt on the justice of their cause, also, but in self-righteousness and without self-suspicion. Thus they go up to smite, and they are smitten heavily, disastrously. Benjamin, the wrong-doer, is wholly victorious.

Then, indeed, they go up and weep before Jehovah, and seem to remember that Benjamin is their "brother," and inquire, shall they go up against him any more? They are answered, simply, "Go up"; and when they go are again smitten almost as heavily as before. Their losses in these two encounters far exceed the whole number of the men of Benjamin,—exceed them by half as many again.

the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah as at other times. And the children of Benjamin went out to meet the people, [and] were drawn away from the city; and they [h]began to smite of the people, slaying as at other times in the highways, of which the one goeth up to Bethel, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and [i]draw them from the city to the highways. And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place and put themselves in array at Baal-tamar; and the [j]ambush of Israelites came forth out of their place, out of the meadows of Geba. And there came from opposite Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel; and the battle was sore; and they knew not that evil was coming upon them. And [k]Jehovah smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of Benjamin that day twenty-five thousand one hundred men: all these drew the sword. So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten. And the men of Israel gave place to Benjamin, because they trusted to the ambush that they had set against Gibeah. And the ambush hastened and spread themselves out against Gibeah; and the ambush advanced, and [l]smote the whole city with the edge of the sword. Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the ambush, that they should make a thick cloud of smoke rise out of the city. And when the men of Israel turned back in the battle, Benjamin began to smite, slaying of the men of Israel about thirty men; for they said, Surely, they are smitten before us as in the former battle. And when the flame began to rise out of the city, a pillar of [m]smoke, then Benjamin looked back, and, behold, the whole city ascended [in smoke] to the heavens. Then the men of Israel turned back, and the men of Benjamin were confounded, for they

h vers. 21, 25, 39.

i Josh. 8. 15, 16.

j Josh. 8. 2. *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 1-9.

k ver. 28.

l *cf.* Deut. 13. 15.

m Josh. 8. 19, 20.

What a lesson as to the hasty and self-righteous judgment of real iniquity! Yet the word from Jehovah was, none the less, "Go up"; and such judgment of it is as imperatively necessary to-day. But it must be judgment all round,—*self*-judgment before any other. And now they come up once more before God, and weep, and offer at last burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, fasting that day till even: and they are heard of God, and obtain the assurance that to-morrow Benjamin will be given up into their hand.

Remembering the connection of Bethel with the life of Jacob, and the discipline to which he is made to bow—that it is here the ark of God is at this time, and not at Shiloh, the place of "peace,"—must be surely significant. And now we see on the part of Israel a self-distrust they had not before. The stratagem at Ai is repeated, and with a like result; for Benjamin, elated with their previous victories, easily fall into the snare, and are only awakened at last, too late, when they see Gibeah going up in flame to heaven. Destruction falls overwhelmingly upon them: only six hundred men escape to the cliff of Rimmon.

saw that evil was come upon them. And they turned before the men of Israel the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and they who came out of the cities destroyed them in their midst. They inclosed Benjamin, chased them, trod them down easily over against Gibeah toward the sunrise: and there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men, all these were men of valor. And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the cliff of Rimmon; and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and they pursued hard after them as far as Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. And all that fell that day of Benjamin were [n] twenty-five thousand men that drew the sword: all these were men of valor. But [o] six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness to the cliff of Rimmon, and abode at the cliff of Rimmon four months. And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, [p] all the city, to the cattle, [even] all that was found; and all the cities that were found they set on fire.

(XXI.)

The rebuilding of Benjamin.

3. Now all the men of Israel had [q] sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his [r] daughter unto Benjamin to wife. And the people came unto [s] Bethel, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and [t] wept sore. And they said, Jehovah, God of Israel, why is it come to pass in Israel, that there should be one [u] tribe lacking to-day in Israel? And it came to pass on the morrow that the people rose early, and built there an [v] altar, and offered up burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.

And the children of Israel said, [w] Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto Jehovah? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to Jehovah to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death.

And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin

n ver. 35.
o ch. 21. 13.
p ver. 37.
q *cf.* ch. 11. 30.
r Deut. 7. 3.
s *cf.* Gen. 35. 1, 2, 19.
t ch. 20. 23, 26.
u ver. 15.
v ch. 6. 24.
w ch. 5. 23.

The rest — with women and children, everything in their cities — the merciless edge of the sword devours. For one awful crime of Gibeah, thousands of innocent lives pay forfeit. But the state, everywhere, we see is frightful. All this time the insult to God in Dan abides unnoticed: a web of heathen cities is suffered to entangle them with the abominations of Baal and Ashtaroth-worship, while indiscriminating judgment extirpates almost one tribe in Israel. The facts need here but the briefest comment.

3. At last, when the sword has done its reckless work, and a few hundred young men, stripped of all that they held dear in life, alone remain, the people wake up to realize the result of their own handiwork; and to inquire, as if of an inscrutable Providence, why this had come to pass. And now they find themselves bound by their own past acts, in which they must seem to have deliberately contemplated the extinction of a tribe, which they had almost accomplished, and of which they are quite ready to throw the blame on God. They had bound themselves, under a curse, not to give a wife to a Benjamite. And

their brother, and said, To-day there is one tribe cut off from Israel. What shall we do for wives for them that remain? for we have sworn by Jehovah that we will not give them of our daughters to wives. And they said, What one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to Jehovah? And, behold, there came none to the camp from [x]Jabesh-gilead, to the congregation: for the people were mustered, and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. And the assembly sent thither twelve thousand of the most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, Go and [y]smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, and the women and the children. And this is the thing that ye shall do: ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain with man. And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead [z]four hundred young women that were virgins, who had known no man by lying with any male. And they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. And the whole assembly sent to speak with the children of Benjamin that were at the cliff of Rimmon, and to proclaim [a]peace to them. And Benjamin returned at that time; and they gave them the women which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead; but even so they found not enough for them.

x 1 Sam. 11. 1-11. 1 Sam. 31. 11-13. 2 Sam. 2. 4-7.

y ch. 20. 37.

z Num. 31. 17, 18.

a *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 6. 7.

And the people repented them for Benjamin, because Jehovah had made a breach among the tribes of Israel. And the elders of the assembly said, What shall we do for wives for those that remain? for the women are destroyed out of Benjamin. And they said, [There must be] a possession for those of Benjamin that have escaped, that a tribe be not blotted out of Israel. But we [b]cannot give them wives of our daughters, for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. And they said, Behold, there is a [c]feast of Jehovah yearly in Shiloh, which

b ver. 1.

c 1 Sam. 1. 3.

now, instead of bringing this in penitential sorrow before God, and seeking to be loosed from their folly, they take the matter once more into their cruel hands.

The inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead had sent no aid to Israel in the war; and this, with another of their desperate oaths, they had adjudged a crime worthy of death. One oath is made the means of evading another; and they send an expedition against the unfortunate city to inflict the ban of utter destruction upon it, reserving only — by an exception which they had no right to make, but which condemned their wholesale and pitiless slaughter — four hundred young maidens for wives to Benjamin.

But this is not enough, and they must have another expedient. Scrupulous oath-keepers as they are, who must not give their daughters, they consider it all right that the Benjamites should *steal* them; and actually suggest a festival to Jehovah as a good opportunity for them to do this! Then they will intercede for them with the aggrieved relations: and this is the plan that is finally carried out.

is on the north side of Bethel, toward the sunrise from the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. And they commanded the sons of Benjamin, saying, Go and [d] lie in wait in the vineyards and see, and behold, when the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards, and [e] catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go into the land of Benjamin. And it shall be when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Gratify us in them, because we took not each man his wife in the war: for ye did not [f] give unto them this time, that ye should be guilty. And the sons of Benjamin did so, and took wives according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance and built the cities and dwelt in them.

And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family: and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.

In [g] those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes.

[d] *cf.* ch. 20. 29.

[e] *ctr.* Gen. 24. 58.

[f] ver. 1.

[g] ch. 19. 1, etc.

This is Israel, the people of God: infirm and wavering where good is to be accomplished; quick and decisive where patience and forbearance would become them; tolerant of what is only against God; fierce and unsparing in judgment, save only of themselves; scrupulously keeping an insane oath, yet managing to evade it by a jesuitry that deceives no one. Such is the people of God, and such is Christendom to-day; and such it has been. Let us search our hearts as we read the record,—not given as a record without purpose in it. How solemn is the repetition at the end of what has been the text of these closing chapters: "In those days there was no king in Israel: *every man did what was right in his own eyes.*"

# SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF RUTH.

THE Book of Ruth is plainly a history of the times of the judges, while as plainly it looks on to David and the kingdom. Thus it naturally stands between Judges and Kings (Samuel). Its spiritual meaning as plainly connects these together.

In its literal sense it shows us how, spite of Israel's failure, God's salvation could go forward, even among the Gentiles themselves. For He does not leave Himself without witness, and where there is a heart susceptible to His grace, there will His grace be found by it. Thus Ruth, this Gentile woman, and under the ban of the law (a Moabitess), finds yet her place in the genealogy of Christ—is one of those who can say, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isa. ix. 6). Nor only this, but in this grace to her the Israelite also is built up again out of his ruin: only through such grace as this can the nation be at last restored and blest.

The spiritual sense, as it is founded upon the literal, follows this very closely. For Judges having shown us the failure of the heavenly people (which results on the one hand in the Lord gathering His own up to Himself in heaven, and on the other in the rejection of the now lifeless profession upon earth), Ruth shows us now the remnant of Israel coming like a mere Gentile, all claim forfeited, and under the ban of the law, converted, received, and built up in Christ (Boaz). And this prepares us for the view of David and Solomon as the double type of Christ in His coming kingdom.

For us also, Ruth may display the grace of God in salvation to the Gentiles, going on through all the time of failure depicted in the Judges. But the application here is only partial, and needs to be used with care. It is only the working of God's grace, being always in principle the same, and ministering to the same need, that makes the one case necessarily analogous to the other.

There are three divisions: which in a book so small as Ruth, and so connected, would class rather as sections:—

Sec. 1. (Chap. i.) Left Alone.

Sec. 2. (Chap. ii.) Help in humiliation: gleaning in the fields of him "in whom strength is."

Sec. 3. (Chaps. iii., iv.) Redemption realized.

## NOTES.

It has been already noticed that the place of Ruth, in the present Hebrew canon, is quite different from that which it occupies in our own arrangement, which is that of the Septuagint and of our common Bibles. Enough has been said as to this, probably, there being nothing to assure us of any divine warrant for the incongruous mixture of books in the Kethubim, while the historical place of Ruth cannot be doubted. The spiritual significance is in complete accordance with this also, as will be perfectly evident as we go through the book.

Spiritually, the place of Ruth is clearly that of a supplement to Judges,—it not being meant by this that its lesson is of inferior importance, which, being the salvation side, it cannot be. Judges, as we have seen, has given us the failure of the heavenly people,—of Christianity, looked at as a dispensation. It is not, of course, meant that God's purposes in it could fail. He never ordained it to "bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit"; but has expressly assured us that *Israel* shall do so. (Isa. xxvii. 6.) Of course people may, if they will, say that Christians are the true Israel of God, and inherit their promises; but the passage cannot be found in which Scripture asserts this. On the contrary, it is just the apostle of the Gentiles, after Christianity as a dispensation had already begun, who tells us that to Israelites, his "kindred according to the *flesh*"—as if he would not allow any escape from his assertion—"pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the *promises*" (Rom. ix. 3, 4),—manifestly the Old Testament ones. Thus nothing can be much plainer than that Isaiah's words refer to no other than the nation now for their sins broken off and disowned. Israel's blessings are all upon earth. Christians are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Eph. i. 3.)

Christians are therefore taught "to wait for the Son of God from heaven," and that "those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" shall then, together with the dead saints raised, "be caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and so, it is added, "shall we be ever with the Lord." (1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 15–17.) But this by no means ends the history of the world: it is plainly beyond this that Israel's promises are to find their fulfillment. "For I would not have you ignorant," says the apostle again, "that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so *all* Israel shall be saved." (Rom. xi. 25, 26.) That is to say, when God's purpose in the gathering of the Gentile Church shall be accomplished, and its number therefore complete, Israel will pass out of her present condition of partial blindness into that of a people *all* holy (see Isa. iv.), a nation wholly the Lord's, such as has never yet been seen. For this, then, plainly, the present dispensation must have passed away: "as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins." (vs. 26, 27.) Read that new covenant in Jeremiah (xxxi. 33, 34), and how plainly does this new condition of the people appear! "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall *teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:*"—just what we are doing now,—"for *they shall all know me,* from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Thus, indeed, shall "all Israel" in that day "be saved." But what will accomplish this? "The coming of the Deliverer out of Zion," replies the apostle. But is not Christ the Deliverer?—and has He not come? Yes; but *not* "*out of Zion.*" He has come out of Bethlehem, and out of Nazareth, and, thank God, out of the grave also; but not yet out of *Zion:* for Zion is the royal city, David's city; and when the King of kings reigns *there,* then, indeed, shall Israel's deliv-

# RUTH.

## SECTION 1. (Chap. i.)

*Left Alone.*

1. (*vv.* 1-5.) The barrenness of one's own way.

1 AND it was in the days that the [a]judges ruled, and there was a [b]famine in the land. And there went a man of [c]Bethlehem-judah to [d]sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. And the man's name was Elimelech, and the name of

*a ctr.* Judg. 19. 1, etc.
*b* Gen. 12.10. Gen. 26.1,2. 2 Ki. 8. 1. *cf.* Am. 8. 11-13.
*c* 1Sam.16.1. *ctr.* Mi. 5. 2-4.
*d* Jer. 42. 7-16. Is. 30. 1-7. *cf.* Jer.2.13, 17-19.

erance be accomplished. Clearly it stands written, that Israel's conversion nationally shall never be complete "until," says their gracious Lord, "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son: . . . in *that day* there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1.)

Now if one ask still, May not this be accomplished without any personal coming of Christ, by the preaching of the gospel? — the answer is given in Revelation (i. 7): "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and *they who pierced Him;* and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." This is just Zechariah's prophecy, and "all kindreds of the earth" is exactly what might be rendered "all the tribes of the land."

Thus it is when He comes in a way visible to all, that Israel will, as a whole, find forgiveness and blessedness: then, and not before. *Nationally*, they will not be converted by any preaching of the gospel now, and so says the apostle again, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes: for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

The change of dispensation, then, is obvious, when Israel is brought back; and the book of Zechariah, in the context of the passages quoted, and with many another prophecy, shows us that there will be a time of trouble, out of which they will be delivered only by the Lord's appearing, and which will be the time of their travail and new birth. In the midst of this it will be that a remnant which at last becomes the nation, will have their preparation, and in poverty and need find their way to Christ. This remnant, in their search and finding, have their fitting symbol in Ruth the Gentile: for on the ground of Gentile grace alone can they stand. For nearly two thousand years they have rejected the Lord: they have abode, according to Hosea's prophecy, "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim,"— Gentiles in practical condition, disowning and disowned of God; with an empty *profession*, however, which may enable us to understand their picture to be that of the *Moabitess*. All the fitness of the history so allegorized will appear as we take it up in detail, until in Boaz is found the Kinsman-Redeemer, in union with whom riches and establishment are found. This, too, is our Redeemer; and many a precious view of Him shall we enjoy as we go through the book. To Israel is, however, as has been said, the first application; and the only way of true profit as to all Scripture is in maintaining the divinely intended meaning. Among the sheaves there will be found, for us as for Ruth, much more than a gleaning.

SEC. 1.

Israel in her faithlessness, her exile from her land, her widowed condition, is first presented to us in Naomi. All is in ruin with her: she is bereaved and

his wife, Naomi, and the names of his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion: Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab and continued there. And Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took

desolate. To her, however, Ruth attaches herself, to share her fortunes. The meaning of this will be found in Micah (ch. v. 3). Israel's travail-time of sorrow is there referred to,— the fruit, on the one hand, of the gathering of the nations against Zion (ch. iv. 11, sq.); but, in a deeper sense, the fruit of the Judge of Israel having been smitten on the cheek (v. 1). Then we have, parenthetically, the glory of the insulted Judge: it is He who comes forth out of Bethlehem to be Ruler in Israel. This is the passage that the scribes quoted to Herod in answer to the question of the wise men at the birth of Christ; but they did not go on to speak of the great glory that is revealed here as His: "whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." He is Israel's divine-human King, yet rejected: and being rejected, He rejects: "therefore doth He give them up." Here is the secret of their condition as a nation since,— a secret still, to them, alas, though so plainly declared; and here is the reason of their final sorrows. But there is a limit: He cannot always give them up: His promises to the fathers must find their fulfillment; so it is added, "He shall give them up, *until*." What is the limit?—"until she which travaileth has brought forth." Their sorrows are the birth-throes of a people, to be born as in one day; and "then shall the remnant of His brethren return unto the children of Israel."

What this last statement means should not now be difficult. If we have but intelligently grasped the Scriptures that have been before us, it will be plain that those whom the Lord counts His brethren, that is, those who do the will of His Father which is in heaven (Matt. xii. 50), have, during the time of His rejection of Israel, been outside of Israel. Even Jews by birth, when converted to Christ, and baptized of the Spirit into one body, necessarily give up Jewish hopes, although for better ones. When, however, the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, and this part of God's purposes has found its consummation, then Israel will be again, and more really than ever, the people of God; and those who are brethren of the King (according to the standpoint of the prophet, Israelite-born) will return to Israelite hopes and heritage.

Now if Naomi stand for Israel as connected with her sorrowful past, and yet with the land to which she is returning, we can easily see in Ruth's clinging to her the return just spoken of, of the children of the King. Yet, at first, all seems wrecked and hopeless: the return is in bitterness and sorrow: then comes the gleaning in strange harvest-fields, where the Lord of the harvest is met and becomes known in His bounty; and finally, redemption, and marriage-songs: and by Ruth, through the grace of Boaz, Naomi is "built up."

(i.) Fixing our eyes, then, upon Naomi as the central figure at the first, we find that her name is "pleasant,"— a terrible contrast, as she realizes it, to the Lord's dealings with her. Her husband is Elimelech, "my God," or, in the form here, "my Mighty One is King." Another contrast: for a famine in the land makes him leave it for the heathen land adjoining, and there he dies.

Thus Israel, self-exiled from her land through unbelief,— for the famine would not suffice for one who had heard the promise, "Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed,"— has lost her enjoyed faith as well as her land, and is in Moab, the place of mere profession.

The names of the sons — Mahlon and Chilion — have been quite differently, indeed oppositely, interpreted: generally, in accordance with their brief lives, Mahlon as "sick," and Chilion as "pining." But it has been urged against this that in this sense they would be unlikely names enough to be bestowed by their parents in their happier days; and it might be urged more conclusively that they are not in keeping with those of their father and mother, both of them

them Moabitish [e] wives: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the second, Ruth; and they dwelt there about ten years. And they [f] died both of them, Mahlon and Chilion: and the woman was left of her two children and of her husband.

2. (6–18.) Separation and adherence.

[2] And she arose, she and her daughters-in-law, that she might [g] return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab that Jehovah had [h] visited his people to give them bread. And she went forth from the place where she had been, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and as they were going on the way to return to the land of Judah, Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, [i] return each to her mother's house; Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me: Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each in the house of her husband. And she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and [j] wept. And they said unto her, [Nay,] but we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Return, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Return, my daughters, go; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, should I even have a hus-

e Deut. 7. 3. cf. Nu. 25. 1, etc. Hos. 7. 8.

f cf. Is. 1. 7-9. Is. 50. 1. Lam. 1. 1-6. Ezek. 19. 10-14. Ezek. 37. 11-14.

g cf. Is. 31. 6, 7. Jer. 3. 8. Jer. 31. 18-21. Hos. 14.

h cf. Ex. 3. 16 with Lk. 1. 68-79. Ezek. 36. 8-12. Ps. 132. 15.

i cf. Josh. 24. 15. Jno. 6. 66-69.

j Deut. 25. 5.

in *contrast* with their after-lot. Cassel proposes, therefore, to derive Mahlon (properly, Machlon) from *machol*, a "circle-dance," and Chilion from *calal*, to "crown,"—thus "crowned." A third view is possible: that there may be a real ambiguity in the words, which we are intended to leave there, and which points the contrast between the beginning and the end in a way quite easy to be understood.

The names of the wives — Ruth and Orpah — are similarly in dispute. Orpah is taken by most to be the same Ophrah, "a fawn," but this is merely conjectural. Without the transposition it could hardly mean anything in Hebrew but "her neck," literally "the back of her neck"; and to give the back of the neck means to turn the back, either in stubbornness or in flight. Orpah's desertion of her mother-in-law cannot but make us incline to such a connection.

Ruth can only be understood as having a letter omitted by contraction. If this be an *aleph*, then it means "appearance," which has been freely taken as "beauty." If the letter dropped be *ain*, then it is taken as "friendship, female friend." This seems to agree with the story, but certainly adds nothing to it; while with a similar derivation it may mean "tended," as by a shepherd: this would seem every way appropriate.

That in the generation of Israel, to which Ruth typically belongs, there will be a portion that will turn their back upon the true national hopes and heritage, becoming finally apostate followers of Antichrist, is plainly predicted in the prophets. Orpah would naturally stand for these, as Ruth for the true remnant. Both widowed,—their first hopes ended, in the time of their distress they turn their several ways, and are separated forever.

(ii.) This is what we have in the next sub-section. Naomi, hopeless as to herself, yet drawn by her affections, sets her face to return to Bethlehem from the country of Moab. But she is unbelieving and bitter of soul, and manifests that strange self-contradiction which, in such states, is so common an experience. Herself on her way back to the land of which she had heard that Jehovah had visited His people to give them bread, she sees nothing for her daughters-in-law but that they must return to their people and to their gods, and prays *Jehovah*

band to-night, and should I also bear sons, would ye then tarry till they were grown? would ye stay on that account from having husbands? Nay, my daughters; for I am in much more bitterness than you: for Jehovah's [k]hand is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah [l]kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth [m]clave to her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back to her people and to her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, [n]Intreat me not to leave thee,—to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. And when she saw that she was [o]steadfastly minded to go with her, she ceased speaking to her.

3. (19-22.) The return to the land.

[3] And they two went on till they came to Bethlehem; and so it was, when they came to Bethlehem, that all the city was [p]moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi,

*k* *cf.* Ps. 38. 1–11. Mi. 7. 9. Lam. 3. 1–3.

*l* *cf.* Is. 29. 13, 14. Ezek. 33. 31, 32. Jer. 3. 10.

*m* *cf.* Is. 10. 20–22. Jer. 50. 4, 5.

*n* *cf.* Zech. 8. 23. 2 Ki. 2. 2. 2 Sam. 15. 21. Is. 26. 13, 14.

*o* *cf.* Deut. 30. 2, 3.

*p* *cf.* Lam. 2. 15.

to give them rest, each in the house of a heathen husband! This is the confusion of a darkened soul; for in darkness all is confusion. All that she is clear about is the ruin in which she is, and she can give counsel of nothing but her despair. Orpah, after a faint resistance, goes back; but with Ruth neither precept nor example can avail to turn her heart from the pursuit of what appeals to her with a power above all difficulties. It is truly with the *heart* that man believeth; and how manifest is the heart in that touching devotion of her's! "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

This is not the language of natural affection simply: *that* stops short of this last. And where this can be said, though it may come in in a subsidiary way, yet it cannot be a secondary thing. The faith of Ruth is, indeed, a beautiful thing to contemplate; and a striking proof of how that which God has planted can flourish in the midst of contrary circumstances and oppositions of all kinds. How little does Naomi here commend her God of whom Ruth speaks! The famine in Bethlehem, mocking it as the "house of bread"; the withdrawal of Elimelech, denying what his name expressed; his death; the Moabitish marriages, one of them her own; then the quick widowhoods; now the mother-in-law's appeal to go back, as Orpah had gone back, to her people and her gods: this is all we know of her surroundings, but which of them is favorable to faith? Ah, it is God that favors it and upholds it; and all the opposition only rouses it into a passion of longing and resolve. There might be little *encouragement:* was there not all the more a deep and deepening *necessity,* which found only in Israel's God the possibility of satisfaction, if not yet the satisfaction itself? Could such longing go *without* satisfaction, or could He who alone could meet it be a dream, or afar off from the need created?

And thus will a remnant be drawn to the God of Israel in times now surely drawing nigh, when around them faith will have vanished from the earth, when darkness covers it, and gross darkness the peoples. (Isa. lx. 2.) Brethren of the King, though as yet little deeming themselves that, they will cleave to the nation in its sorrows and widowhood, and following it be drawn into the land.

(iii.) So Naomi returns, and Ruth with her, at present only to feel the bitterness of this return. She owns that Jehovah has brought her back empty, and

call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out [q]full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty. Why call ye me Naomi, when Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath done evil to me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, that returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of [r]barley-harvest.

SECTION 2. (Chap. ii.)

*Help in humiliation: gleaning in the field of him "in whom strength is."*

1. (*vv.* 1-17.) Power and grace.

[1] AND Naomi had a [s]kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of valor, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was [t]Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me go now to the field, and [u]glean among the ears of corn after him in whose eyes I shall [v]find favor. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. So she went; and she came and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her [w]hap was to light upon the portion of the field which belonged to Boaz, who was of the family

*q cf.* Am. 5. 1-3. Lam. 1.12-17. Lam.4. 7,8.

*r* 2Sam.21.9.

*s cf.* Heb. 2. 11-17 with Jno. 1. 14.

*t* 1 Kl. 7. 22. *cf.* Acts 3.3. Matt.28.18.

*u* Deut. 24. 19. Lev. 19. 9, 10. *cf.* Gen. 42. 1, 2.

*v cf.* Hos. 14. 2.

*w cf.* Gen. 24. 21-27.

that in doing this He has testified against her. But there is no light beyond. No Father's arms welcome her. No Father's house opens to let her in. She comes back, as Israel will come back, to have the finger pointed at her, and the question uttered aloud, Is this Naomi? And yet the cry, "I have sinned," is heard; and Bethlehem shall answer to its name. The fields are white, and the reapers ready: it is the beginning of barley-harvest.

SEC. 2.

In the next section we have help found for Ruth, and are introduced to the redeemer Boaz, the plain figure of Christ. Not at once is redemption found, however, nor even known about. Ruth is at first merely a gleaner in his fields, soon learning, indeed, his bounty, and receiving from his hand, but in humiliation. It is a middle state that souls often pass through, before the realization of redemption; and with Israel's remnant in the day to come, such a gradual dawning of light as to Christ, and their relationship to Him is natural, if not inevitable. The story of Joseph's brethren presents this to us from the side of conscience and their guilt in relation to Him. Ruth gives us rather the attraction of heart, with light gradually breaking in,—a gentler and quieter story, though not without connection with the older one.

(i.) First, we are made to know, though Ruth yet knows not, of Boaz and the relationship of Naomi to him. Boaz means "in him is strength," and he is spoken of as a mighty man of valor,—not of wealth, as in the common version, though the word may mean "wealth"; but not so probably in the connection in which it stands. It is the same expression which is used of the deliverers in the book of Judges, and has a good reason for its place in this sense here. The wealth which Christ has for the needy has indeed been attained by conflict; for though He was "rich" from eternity who "for our sakes became poor," yet the "riches of His grace" had to be acquired before they could be bestowed. It is fit that we should be reminded here, first of all, of that accomplished warfare into the fruits of which we enter, though this be not the subject of the book. Thus "in Him is strength" for our redemption.

Notice that Boaz is strictly only a relation of Elimelech's, and through him it is that Naomi has any claim. Israel has no relationship to Christ except through the faith that Elimelech represents. In fact, and on this account, it is only through Ruth that Naomi *can* claim; but this will come before us later. Of all this she knows nothing yet.

of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and he said unto the reapers, [x]Jehovah be with you. And they answered him, Jehovah [y]bless thee. And Boaz said unto his servant that was set over the reapers, [z]Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the [a]Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab; and she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came and continued from the morning even until now: her sitting in the house hath been but little. And Boaz said unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? [b]Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence; but abide here with my maidens. Let [c]thine eyes be on the field that they reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men not to touch thee? And when thou [d]thirstest, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and [e]bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found favor in thine eyes, that thou shouldst regard me, and I a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath been fully [f]shown me, all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law, since the death of thy husband, and that thou hast [g]left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy birth, and art come unto a people that thou knewest not heretofore. Jehovah recompense thy doing, and may thy reward be full from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose [h]wings thou art come to take refuge. And she said, Let me find favor in thine eyes, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast [i]spoken to the heart of thy handmaid, though I be not like one of thy handmaidens. And Boaz said unto her at meal-time, [j]Come hither and

*x cf.* Col.4.1.
*y cf.* Ps. 129. 7-9.
*z cf.* Gen. 42. 7. Jer. 31. 20.
*a cf.* Deut. 23. 3. Matt. 13. 1, 2 with Ezek. 16. 44-48. Hos. 1. 8, 9.
*b cf.* ch.1.14. Hos. 11. 4.
*c cf.* Jer. 31. 21.
*d cf.* Is. 12.3. Isa. 55. 1, 2.
*e* 1 Sam. 25. 23.
*f* cf. 1 Ki. 8. 41.
*g cf.* Mat.10. 28-31.
*h* Ps. 91. 4. *cf.* Matt.23. 38.
*i cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.
*j cf.* Song1.4.

But it is harvest, and Ruth proposes to go into the fields and glean,—a humble occupation and a poor one, but where, in the mercy that characterized the law, the poor and the stranger had special rights. These harvest-fields lead us once more to think of that work of Christ, the death of the corn of wheat, whereby the bread of life has been provided for us. Nature is full of its testimony to Him,—fuller than even His people ever cared to know.

But what a harvest-field is there in Scripture for us! And is it not true that, as surely as the whole of it is open to us now, so surely will the remnant of Israel, brought in after the Church is gone from earth, have but the gleanings? May not this even be a rightful application of the statute as to the gleaner, coming where it does amid the "set times" of Leviticus xxiii.? May not there be room left for a double application of such a principle?

But gleaning in the field brings Ruth into contact with the master of the field; and so it is with the precious word of God when sought as food for the soul: it brings us into the presence of Him before whose eyes "all things are naked and open," and who delights to minister to the necessity thus making itself manifest. How tender is His desire toward the seekers of the living bread that they should "go not to glean in another field, nor go from hence"! How soon do they find provision made for the inevitable thirst! How they are made to realize that here is One with knowledge of all their ways, and all the path by which they

eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers; and he reached her [k] parched corn, and she did eat and was satisfied, and [l] left [some] over. And when she arose to glean, Boaz charged his young men, saying, Let her glean even [m] between the sheaves, and reproach her not; and [n] draw out also out of the bundles, and leave it for her to glean, and check her not. So she gleaned in the field until evening, and [o] beat out what she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley.

2. (18-23.) Confirmation and progress: a glimpse of redemption.

[2] And she took it up, and went into the city, and showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned; and she brought out and gave her what she had left over after she was satisfied. And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where hast thou wrought? [p] Blessed be he that regarded thee. And she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, The man's name with whom I worked to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of Jehovah, who hath not left off his [q] kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is related to us, one of our [r] redeemers. And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep with my young men, until they have finished all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is well, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that

*k* 1 Sa. 17.17. 1 Sa. 25.18. *cf.* Josh. 5. 11.
*l* 2 Ki. 4. 43. Ps. 107. 9.
*m cf.* Matt. 15. 21-28.
*n* cf. Gen. 42. 25. Hos.11.3,4.
*o cf.* Judg.6. 11. *ctr.* Prov. 12. 27.
*p cf.* Num. 24. 9. Matt. 25.34 -40.
*q cf.* Ps. 85. 1-3.
*r* Lev 25.25.

have come to where they are! Then there is nearer intimacy: we begin to learn what it is to take from His hand and to eat with Him till we are sufficed, and have something over. Then the gleaning goes on with more boldnesss and with more success: there is again and again what must have been dropped on purpose for us, until we find we have quite a store of precious grain. All this is the common history of seeking souls; while yet rest is not found, nor redemption known, nor relation established with the Lord of the harvest.

(ii.) It is from her mother-in-law that Ruth learns presently as to the man with whom she has found favor; but the knowledge she gains is, after all, indefinite. There is some relationship, she learns, and he is *one* of our redeemers, — a phrase which shows how little she has to give that is intelligent or that can be laid hold of. Joseph's brethren are long, as we have seen, before they know with whom they have to do, and who knows them so well, and learn from his own lips that he is Joseph. It is a secret that can only be learnt from his own lips. For the remnant, attaching themselves to Israel's hopes and going back along the lines of Israel's history, it seems as if there would be much groping in the darkness before the light will dawn. They look upon Him whom they have pierced, only when He comes manifestly to all. Yet He has been with them as with Nathaniel before they see Him; and the Lord's words in the great prophecy of Matthew xxiv. seem clearly to imply that there will be those in Judea before He appears who will listen to His voice, and obey Him. Are we to make a distinction here between different classes? — those with less light and those with more? — or is it true of all that they will be under the fog of Jewish teaching, learning from the mother-in-law, and counting Him but as "*one* of their redeemers"?

Thus Ruth, however, is brought into connection with Boaz; for the grace that is in him to make deeper impression continuously upon her. She abides through

they come not upon thee in another field. So she kept with the maidens of Boaz to glean until the end of barley harvest, and of wheat harvest. And she abode with her mother in law.

SECTION 3. (Chap. iii., iv.)

*Redemption realized.*

1. (iii.) The claim of barrenness.

[1] AND Naomi, her mother-in-law, said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek a [s] resting-place for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now, is not Boaz of our [t] kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the [u] threshing-floor. [v] Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and go down to the floor; [but] let not thyself be known to the man till he have done eat-

*s* ch. 1. 9. *cf.* Song 1. 7, 8. Zeph. 3. 17–20.
*t* ch. 2. 1, etc.
*u cf.* Jer. 30. 3–7 with Matt. 3. 12.
*v cf.* Ex. 19. 14. Ezek. 36. 24, 25.

the barley-harvest and through the wheat-harvest following. That which is gathered becomes naturally more valuable. But as to her own relations there is no change: Boaz is a kinsman,—*one* of her redeemers, and her home—a poor one yet—is with her mother-in-law.

SEC. 3.

All is now to be changed for Ruth; and thus, also, for Naomi. What follows is based upon two laws in Israel: the law as to the redemption of an inheritance (Lev. xxv. 25), and that of raising up a brother's name on his inheritance (Deut. xxv. 5–12),—things which are here brought together, and which in application to Israel belong clearly together. Heir and inheritance, in their case, need alike to be redeemed; yea, and the name of the dead raised up, which is accomplished for Israel by a true spiritual resurrection, the breath of a new life breathed into them, as in Ezekiel's vision of dry bones (ch. xxxvii). In Ruth the story is, indeed, differently told, but it is essentially the same, and here has a tenderness and beauty all its own.

(i.) In this section we find Ruth no longer a gleaner. She is putting forth new claims and cherishing high aspirations. And here her mother-in-law is her instructor once more. She has already pointed out Boaz as a kinsman of Elimelech, and one of their redeemers, but for some time this seems to have no practical significance for either of them. Now she is full of a new interest. Ruth must have a resting-place for herself, and to find it she must seek it. Very simply and naturally her mind turns to Boaz: ignorantly, indeed, and yet with a knowledge such as the heart teaches, and which in the end proves right. Ruth is bidden by her to put forth a personal claim upon Boaz, according to the law of Deuteronomy, and this she does,—to find in the first place that she has made an apparent mistake, but which in the end proves none. It is only upon the failure of a nearer kinsman than himself that Boaz can act. Naomi herself has called him *one* of their redeemers. It must be proved satisfactorily if there is more than one.

The remnant (whom Ruth represents) learns, first of all, from the nation (which is Naomi) certain lessons as to redemption, which personal experience, however, alone can interpret, and get right. The only religion that avails anything is that of experiment: in making which both heart and conscience get searched out, their needs thoroughly explored, and then met. The believing that avails for us is one that shows itself in coming to Him; yet the soul coming may find at first disappointment. The power of the "nearer kinsman" must be thoroughly and practically understood before Christ can show His power.

"Rest" can only come from a Redeemer. Naomi makes no mistake there. When Christ says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," He is declaring Himself this; and it is as such—the only and all-sufficient One—that He will

ing and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he hath lain down, and thou shalt go and uncover the place at his feet, and lay thee down; and he shall tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. And she went down to the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law had bidden her.

And Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, and he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn. And she came softly, and uncovered the place at his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass that at midnight the man was startled and turned, and behold, a woman lying at his feet. And he said, Who, art thou? And she said, I am Ruth thy handmaid: [w]spread then thy wing over thy handmaid, for thou art a redeemer. And he said, [x]Blessed be thou of Jehovah, my daughter: thou hast shown more kindness at the end than at the first, inasmuch as thou followedst not after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, [y]fear not: I will do for thee all thou sayest; for all the gate of my people knoweth that thou art a [z]virtuous woman. And now truly I am a redeemer; but there is a redeemer [a]nearer than I. Tarry the night, and it shall be in the morning, if he will act the redeemer to thee, well, let him redeem; but if he will not redeem thee, then will I redeem thee, as Jehovah liveth: lie down until the morning. And she lay at his feet until morning, and she rose up before one could know another: and he said, Let it not be known that

*w cf.* Song 1. 4. Jer. 3. 23–25. Hos. 6. 1–3.
*x cf.* Hos. 14. 4–7.
*y cf.* Is. 41. 10–14.
*z cf.* Ezek. 16. 60–63. Jer. 50. 4, 5.
*a cf.* Gal. 3. 18–21. Jer. 31. 31–34. Heb. 8. 8–13.

or can give it to us. This we must learn aright. Thank God, He has proved His power to fulfill this word of His, all the centuries down.

Boaz is winnowing barley at night in the threshing-floor. And Israel is such a floor, which the Lord is going to purge, according to the Baptist's testimony. (Matt. iii. 12.) A night of affliction is coming for them, in which He will winnow the chaff from the grain, that He may gather to Himself that which has value for Him. "The fan is in *His* hand." Judgment, alas, must come; but He means by it to take forth the precious from the vile. And this is the very time when the remnant, therefore, in the darkness of as black a night as the earth has ever seen, shall creep to His feet, and claim Him as their own. Assuredly it will be a bold act then, if even Ruth's seems so; yet this grace has been dawning upon them, and His voice has seemed to speak amid the voices of the prophetic promises, yet but beginning to be intelligible. At midnight, suddenly, just at the darkest, comes His voice with a question — how necessary a one, when it is redemption that is to be realized — "Who art thou?" How blessed to know that the right answer is but to own, "I am Ruth, thy handmaid," for this is the name of the barren woman whose natural hopes are dead. To such an one it is that the law applies and pledges itself: no other has any claim. "Spread, then, thy wing over thy handmaid," — this soul with its need of shelter, — "for thou art a redeemer."

But not yet can the prayer be answered fully. Always is there, indeed, encouragement for the needy from these lips that speak here. Still she must await the morning. She is to be answered; some way redemption will surely come: so much she knows, but is *he* — will *he* be — the redeemer? This question, is it not answered for the remnant also only fully in the "morning," — a morn-

a woman came unto the floor. And he said, Bring the cloak that is upon thee, and hold it. And she held it, and he measured [b] six [measures] of barley, and laid it on her: and he went unto the city. And she came to her mother-in-law; and she said, [c] Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six [measures] of barley gave he me: for he said, Go not empty to thy mother-in-law. And she said, Remain quiet, my daughter, till thou shalt see how the matter will fall out: for the man will [d] not be at rest until he have finished the thing to-day.

[b] *cfr.* ch. 2. 17.

[c] *cf.* Num. 6. 27 with Is. 43. 4–7.

[d] *cf.* Is. 62. 1–5.

2. (iv. 1–8.) The legal kinsman.

[2] And Boaz went up to the [e] gate, and sat him down there; and behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz spake passed by. And he said, Ho, such an one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the redeemer, Naomi, who is returned from the country of Moab, hath sold the allotment of the [f] field that was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to inform thee, saying, Buy it before those that sit [here], even before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem [it]; and if thou wilt not redeem it, tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. And Boaz said, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou buyest it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to [g] raise up the name of the dead upon his

[e] Gen. 23. 10, etc.

[f] Lev. 25. 25.

[g] Deut. 25. 5, etc.

ing which He makes by His own coming, the glory of His presence. Ministered to they are, sustained by His hand, still sent back, as Ruth to her mother-in-law, to await the morning!

Ah, but His heart will not have its rest till the matter is finished, and redemption is found for Ruth,—"shepherd-tended" Ruth!

(ii.) Now we are to be introduced to the other kinsman: there is but one other in the story; and strange it is, when we know our Boaz, that *he* should have the prior claim! Is there, then, another redeemer? Does the word of God give any ground for such a supposition? Yes, *as a supposition*. Hypothetically, there is a mode of salvation other than by Christ: test it, and you find by experience (once more the teacher) that there is, and can be, only one.

"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." This is the voice of God by the prophet Ezekiel (xviii. 27), and every word of God shall stand. It is a way of salvation, too, that is declared,—not simply of a righteousness that needs none. It is the wicked man who is spoken of,—the man who can already be called that, and who as that needs salvation. Forgiveness of sins is announced for him: "All his transgressions that he has committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live" (v. 22). Thus the mercy of God is pledged to a returning soul: and, of course, one must say, in all sincerity and truth, or it could not be from Him.

Yet this is not the salvation which we find in Christ. Its condition is not of faith in Him, but of works: to obtain it one must have a righteousness which is of works. And these two principles—of faith and of works—are principles that

inheritance. And the redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I [h]mar mine own inheritance: do my [part of the] redemption for thyself, for I [i]cannot re-

[h] *cf.* Gal. 3. 10.
[i] *cf.* Ro. 8. 3.

cannot be united together, so that it will not do to say that although faith in Christ is not here formally made mention of, it must in fact be found. On the contrary, it is most certain that the principle here declared *excludes* faith in Christ in any evangelic sense. "For if it be of grace," says the apostle, "it is no more of work, otherwise grace is no more grace." (Rom. xi. 6.) As surely, then, as the principle here is that of righteousness by work, so surely is it not a righteousness by faith: it is contrastive and contradictory to faith.

It is the principle of the law as given the second time, after the people had sinned and made a golden calf. It is not pure law, but law modified and tempered by mercy, so as to give man as failed the means of self-recovery, if self-recovery were possible. But it was not possible for them, and is not possible for any. Of this law the mediator was Moses, and not Christ; and so entirely unavailing was it, that the very mediator of the law becomes of necessity the accuser of the people: "there is one that accuseth you," says the Lord to Israel, "even Moses, in whom ye trust." (John v. 45.)

Thus we see the redeemer who is not Boaz, but the redeemer who cannot redeem. The law is, indeed, the nearest kinsman that man has, and the one to which, apart from the teaching of divine grace, man naturally turns. One of the reasons of the delay in Christ's coming was that the law should first of all be tried; for this is but the trial of man's righteousness. And so in the history of a saved soul, the law's claim must first be set aside, that Christ may not be to it as "one of our redeemers," but the only Redeemer possible, the Boaz "in whom is strength."

It is a matter for judgment, and therefore Boaz goes up to the gate, where causes were habitually tried. Presently, behold, the redeemer of whom he had spoken passes by. Notice, the man is quite indifferent: he has none of the loving interest that we find in the heart of Boaz: he would pass by, as the priest and Levite did the man on the road to Jericho. And such is the heartlessness of the legal method. Law has no personal interest, and cannot have. It speaks in the third person: if one comes under the rule, be it so; this is its impartiality, its indifference. But thus it cannot represent the heart of God.

Boaz calls the man, and he sits down; then ten men of the elders of the city are called, and they sit down; the ten commandments are our Boaz's witnesses that the law is incompetent to do aught for a sinner's salvation. How soon and simply could the case be settled, if always the ten and no others were witnesses! But people make this great mistake, that, because, in fact, God is merciful, He will not require the righteousness which the law requires, which the ten commandments specify, but something, they know not how much, under this. Whereas, though He may be patient and give time, and give repeated opportunities, He *never* lowers His demand, never can accept less than "what is lawful and right." Above all, He has never proposed Christ as a makeweight for our deficiencies. "If righteousness come by the law," says the apostle, "then Christ is dead in vain."

Boaz begins with the question of inheritance: "Naomi, who is returned from the country of Moab, has sold the allotment of the field that was our brother Elimelech's. . . . If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it. . . . And he said, I will redeem it." We see here the connection between the land and the people of Israel. In fact, how carefully has the land been guarded for them, keeping sabbath while the heirs are exiled! God has given it by absolute promise to the seed of Abraham, and that according to the flesh. But here is the difficulty: "And Boaz said, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou buyest it also of Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance."

> deem it. And this was the custom in former time in Israel, in cases of redemption, and in cases of exchange, to confirm the whole matter: a man drew off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor; and this was the attestation in Israel. And the redeemer said unto Boaz, Buy it for thyself; and he drew off his shoe.

Elimelech is dead, that is Israel looked at as identified with the faith of God as King; yet Israel, in fact, remains, though as Naomi, widowed and destitute. But there is a young life, a new generation, through whom the name of the dead may be raised up. Yet these are as the Moabitess, whom the law cannot bring in, but must keep out: for it is written that "a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of Jehovah forever." Well may the kinsman fear, therefore, lest in taking Ruth he should mar his own inheritance.

Throughout the story this is the title that everywhere comes into prominence. Despite all Ruth's attractiveness and piety, she is always spoken of, emphatically, as *Ruth, the Moabitess.* And the law, in presence of this conceded truth, can make no exception in her favor. The law is against her wholly,—accuses, convicts, and cannot justify. So hopeless is Israel's case in the hands of Moses.

If we look at the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel of Matthew, we shall find there, without the stigma of her origin, the name of Ruth. She is the third of four women only who stand exceptionally in the record there. At a first glance, we might think, uselessly also: for of what use are they in establishing His title to be David's Son? None, clearly; and so they must have another purpose: for everything has purpose in the word of God; yet what purpose *in a genealogy?*

But the genealogy is not merely His as Son of *David;* the title of it adds to this that it is Christ's as Son of *Abraham.* And the three names that end with Ruth are in this part, as we see: can they have part, then, in showing that Christ is Son of Abraham?

Now here light breaks in at once: for the Seed of Abraham is He in whom all families of the earth are to be blessed,—Gentile as well as Jew; while these three names are *Gentile.* How vain, then, to think of denying the Gentiles their part in Christ!

But more: in each of these names we may discern what might be easily taken as a blot upon the genealogy. What was Tamar? what Rahab? what even Ruth, the Moabitess? But does not this, then, show us all the more the Seed of Abraham, the blesser of the nations? Yes, and each name tells out, and in perfect order, the reality of grace. Tamar, whose *sin* alone brings her into the list, begins the story; for sin is the fundamental fact for the gospel; and our sin owned gives us title to the Saviour of sinners. But then Rahab (no less the sinner) shows us *faith,* a faith that separates from judgment and brings into blessing: that is as clearly the second foundation.

What, then, does the name of Ruth emphasize in this series? Can it be anything but this, that the law therefore is not the way of blessing, does not furnish the redeemer, but grace only does?—for Ruth the Moabitess is debtor to the grace of Boaz! Here, surely, all is consistent, all is harmony. And how Ruth's character, so different from that of those who precede her in this list, assures us that not those whom men would class as sinners, but those also whom they might class as saints, are all together by the law convicted and condemned, and that for all who receive salvation grace must reign!

No, assuredly the law cannot raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance. The power of God in grace can alone meet the need that is here symbolized. The kinsman passes his shoe—the sign of entering upon possession—to him in whom power is. The law testifies and yields its rights to Christ, and He is declared the only possible Redeemer. Such will the remnant find Him in the day that comes.

3. (9-22.) "The resurrection of the name upon the inheritance."

[3] And Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, Ye are [j] witnesses this day, that I have acquired all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. And Ruth also, the wife of Mahlon, have I [k] acquired to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not [l] cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said, [We are] witnesses. Jehovah make the woman that cometh into thy house [m] like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and make thee strength in Ephratah, and get thee a name in Bethlehem; and let thy house be like the house of [n] Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which Jehovah shall give thee of this young woman.

And Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto her, and Jehovah gave her conception, and she bare a [o] son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be Jehovah, who hath not left thee this day without a redeemer, and may his name be famous in Israel. And he shall be to thee a [p] restorer of life, and a support of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became [q] nurse to it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to [r] Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the [s] father of Jesse, the father of David.

j *cf.* Jer. 32. 6–15, 37–44.
k *cf.* Ps. 107. 2, 3. Acts 20. 28.
l *cf.* Is. 65. 8, 9.
m Gen. 29. 32, etc.
n Gen. 38. 29.
o *cf.* Is. 11.
p *cf.* Is. 51. 22.
q *cf.* Is. 49. 13–23.
r *cf.* Is. 54. 1–10.
s 1 Sam. 16. 1, etc.

(iii.) Boaz proclaims his title and his grace. The inheritance becomes his by purchase; and Ruth also, once more and for the last time spoken of as the Moabitess, he acquires for himself. Israel's land is yet to be known as Immanuel's, for indeed He has bought it at its full value. The people, also, are the purchased of His love. In Ruth's case the figure falls necessarily short, and the word used does not positively convey the idea of purchase. All types must, indeed, fall short, whether as picturing our need or the way that He has met it. This we are prepared for. The outline may be slight, but is sufficient. When it is followed up in the day to come, how it will be seen that here is One who has strength in Ephratah, and His name in Bethlehem; and how will the remnant "break forth" like the house of Pharez, "breaker forth," as it is written, "For thou shalt *break forth* on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shalt inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited, . . . for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more." And how Ruth's story is transfigured here! "For thy Maker is thy husband, Jehovah of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: the God of the whole earth shall He be called." (Isa. liv. 3–5.)

Naomi, therefore, is built up by Ruth, and her son becomes (in another sense, of course,) her redeemer, the restorer of her life, and the support of her old age. For the son's name is Obed, the "servant," and the sweet adoring service of the new generation of Israel will be in those days the restoring of life indeed. Fit it is that the "women, her neighbors," should give the name to this new seed, as the nations round (then neighborly!) will speak the praise of the new nation. For then for the first time shall they completely fulfill the word: "But thou,

Now these are the 'generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David. ' Matt. 1. 3.

Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." (Isa. xli. 8, 9.)

This is indeed a sign of perfect redemption, whatever the dispensation: "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: *thou hast loosed my bonds.*" (Ps. cxvi. 16.) Redemption is thus the spring of service, and gives character to it; and if we are indeed in the nearer and more wonderful place of sons of God, the service of sons is only the fullest, the most joyful service. Yea, the only-begotten Son, to the wonder and delight of heaven, has come forth and served; yea, and still serves; and in that day will serve; as He has Himself said:—

"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and *will come forth, and serve them.*" (Luke xii. 37.)

# THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS.

THAT the king is contemplated from the beginning of the book of Samuel is plain from the close of Hannah's song. Samuel himself anoints both Saul and David. And yet it is as plain, nevertheless, that he, as the prophet of God, and to whom the proposition of the people to make them a king is only a species of rebellion against God, (a view of it sanctioned by the Lord also,)—*he* is in some sort antagonistic to the kingdom. All through it the prophets abide as guard and balance. They are not of course hostile, because it has been legitimated by the authority of Him who is the source of all authority, but they watch it, none the less, jealously. No wonder, if it be the fact that "man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." They perish because they have no link with God, whom by their very nature they are incapable of knowing. Man is not incapable, and here is his responsibility; but he is capable, alas, of forgetting God, and the higher he is lifted up, the easier is it for him to do this. He becomes *like* the beasts: in which we see the suitability of Nebuchadnezzar's punishment to his sin (Dan. iv.)—made to take his place among the beasts till his pride is humbled, and he owns that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."

Here was indeed the prophet's voice to the monarch, and here is the prophet's place. He stands for the rule of the Most High, into collision with which the rule of man comes so readily. Here is his vocation at all times, and here is Samuel's antagonism to the kingship in Israel. He foresees and warns the people of what will be its character —a warning which, as we know, history so completely justifies.

And yet Judges has closed with the detail of evils which implied the need of a king. The judges were themselves but deliverers raised up temporarily by God to meet the condition into which the people were constantly falling, and which was but the issue of every man's doing that which was "right in his own eyes." How many can be trusted as judges in their own case? The very office of the judge testified, therefore, to the need of some stronger and more continuous rule than that they exercised.

Yet the dwelling-place of God was in the midst of Israel, as we know, with a priesthood organized that they might have access to Him, and that by Urim and Thummim His voice might be heard in their midst. In fact, save early in the history of the Judges, in the case of the war with Benjamin,—and how little rightly then!—we do not hear of one consultation of the divine oracle during all that period! In the beginning of the present book we are brought back to Shiloh and the priesthood, but only to show us everything in ruin there. The priests are corrupt, the offering of the Lord is despised. In their strait with the

Philistines indeed, the people have recourse to the ark, but as a charm, in such a way as only to show how entirely they have lost the sense of the divine holiness, and in result only to bring upon themselves a catastrophe by which for a long period all this medium of communication with God is practically set aside. Shiloh is deserted, the ark at one place, the tabernacle at another, while Samuel as prophet of the Lord offers sacrifice in different places, thus clearly recognizing the break-down of the legal ritual. The ark returns no more to the tabernacle, but is brought by David to Zion, and his son Solomon builds the temple for its abode.

All is in transition therefore in this book; and the king it is who comes forward as the restorer, and the establisher of the new order. Thus the need of the king is emphasized, and the divine sanction is put upon the institution.

Add to this that the provision had already been made in the law itself (Deut. xvii. 14–20) for just such need and request on the part of the people,—"When thou shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations round about me." The whole style of this, and the desire to be like the nations, stamp it indeed as the will of man and unbelief. That it is foreseen and met, just as the Lord here meets it, in no wise shows it to be approved of Him. Yet that their request is granted shows that there is that in it which accords with what is in His mind, and by which His purposes will be carried forward toward fulfillment.

The first king is speedily set aside. But then David, a man after God's own heart, is promoted to the kingdom, which in his hand extends a long way toward the limits of the ancient promise to Israel, while he is promised the perpetuity of it in his seed, spite of all failure. Might it not seem as if now there would be no check or interruption to the blessing thus connected with the presence of the king?

Yet the following book shows us a wholly different, contrasted picture. Solomon indeed begins it with the building of the temple, and increased and manifold glories; but in his son's reign at once ten tribes are rent away, and thenceforth, though intermittent, decay creeps on. Finally, both thrones are leveled to the dust; and that of David which promised to be so stable has never yet been restored. The monarchy ends with an Ichabod completer than that which preceded it, and now protracted for nearly twenty-five hundred years.

What are we to gather from what seem such utter contradictions? Thank God, as Christians the key is in our hands. We know that David and Solomon were but shadows of the true King; that He is come, but, rejected of Israel, is gone up to take another throne on high; that He is David's Seed yet David's Lord; and that in His hands the kingdom is safe, though the time of its setting up once more is delayed for the accomplishment of other purposes which are now being fulfilled; that for this King the earth still waits, and will never have its blessing until He comes to bless it with a reign of power and righteousness.

Let us not deceive ourselves. This kingdom is not set up yet. We are, it is true, as Christians, "in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. 9); but not in His "kingdom and *glory*" (1 Thess. ii. 12). Nor are we to see this gradually ushered in by plenteous increase in gospel harvest-fields. No doubt there is blessing at home and the gospel is going to the heathen; on the other hand the mask of Christianity is almost dropped off the face of the mere profession, and revealing the dominant spirit of Christendom as that of unbelief. The Church of Christ has no more answered to its responsibility than did Israel of old. And the need—(although men know it not, all the social movements of the day proclaim it)—is for the KING! Yes, a true Potentate, safely to be trusted with power, and who will wield it. As the angels said to those men of Galilee, who gazed up after Him whom the cloud had just hidden from their sight: "This same Jesus shall come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." And when those blessed "feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," whence He then went up,—when "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee,"—*then* "the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His Name One." (See Zech. xiv.)

But we are not now to dwell upon this blessed time. Even in its very failure and evil, the day of the kings of Israel anticipates and prophecies it. This we shall hope to consider in its place. So much as has been said will prepare us for the mingled promise and disappointment that fill the pages we are now to study. The ruin of man still, as ever, makes us to realize that from God alone must salvation come; and as this is realized, the assurance that from Him it shall come grows into a glorious certainty of expectation, which even yet beckons us on for the grand fulfillment, now so near to come.

The connection of the king with the ark, and the habitation of God on earth, is very clearly evidenced in the hundred and thirty-second psalm, where David is, as so commonly, the type of a greater, from whom he is yet, on that very account, distinguished. David's afflictions are pleaded, his zeal to find a dwelling-place for God on earth, and that for his sake the face of His anointed may not be turned away. The anointed is of course the king, but, I think, as standing in general for the kingly power in Israel. And this is answered in the promise, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." A conditional pledge as to his children follows, but there is One Seed, one special Anointed, or Messiah, who shines through all. He is the true David and his Seed alike. He it is who by His sufferings and His heart for God secures the abiding presence of Jehovah with His people. The shadows pass, because they are but shadows; but the kingship abides for the sake of the Man after God's heart, who alone also meets the need which exists in the heart of the people also, and who lives eternally to meet it. Wrongly interpreted as it has been before, the "Desire of all nations" is found at last in Him.

The next psalm gives us the complementary thought. There it is of Aaron we hear, not of David, and the unction that flows down from him. The Messianic interpretation alone unites these different things, by pointing to the "Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13), who thus doubly gives the habitation of God to be amongst and accessible to men. Thus alone the permanent temple shall be built, the partial type of which is seen in the reign of Solomon. The glorious reality transcends all types: the throne of God is His; the glory of God is seen in His face. And thus the books of the Kings (Samuel, as well as what is commonly called so) make good their claim to the Leviticus place among the historical books. In these books of Kings the sanctuary has plainly a proportionate importance beyond that which it has in any other of this second Pentateuch, except perhaps Chronicles, which is, as we know, the *resume* from another point of view of this very history. Joshua sees the ark in the parted Jordan, and in its temporary rest in Shiloh. In Judges we lose sight of it almost throughout. In the Captivity books, though the temple is rebuilt, the ark and the glory are alike gone. In the Kings, on the other hand, while prophet, priest and king for the first time appear together, all these are seen in their relation to that dwelling of God in the midst from which of necessity they gather all their significance. For while the priest is manifestly connected with it, the king is but the delegate of that throne in the sanctuary whose supremacy over all the prophet stands for and enforces.

The Books of the Kings therefore fill well the third place in the historical books, if we should not rather call them, with the Septuagint, the "Books of the *Kingdoms*": for this title gives the fuller thought, not merely of a succession of mortal because sinful men upon the throne of Israel, but rather of this "kingdom of *men*" upon the one side in its relation to the Kingdom of Him who ruleth over all, and in whose throne, as delegate, the king of Israel sat. Among these books of the Kings or Kingdoms, Samuel evidently has its place, as the first (where the Septuagint places it). Samuel and Kings, as we name them, should be, however, as they were originally, but one book each.

The scope and divisions may be more concisely stated:—

The Books of Kings show us the history of the Sanctuary-Throne in Israel, with Prophet, Priest and King as its interpreters among men: these, in the offices they fill, and in their own failure to fill them, pointing forward to the Three-fold Anointed One, whose glory it will be to sustain all these relationships in unbroken, perfect unity of power and blessing. Of these books—

1. *Samuel* shows us the sources and beginning of human sovereignty in Israel.
2. *Kings*, the progress of the kingdom: its increase; then its division and internal strife to final dissolution.

# SAMUEL.

## SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK.

SAMUEL, as just now said, shows us the origin of human sovereignty in Israel. It has two sources, apparently, and in some sense truly, quite diverse from one another, yet combining in the end harmoniously.

First, there is the will of the people, which is, as expressed by them, a real rejection of the Divine Sovereign as such. But there are needs which underlie, though these are all summed up in the evil heart of unbelief which departeth from the living God. Could the best provision that could be made avail against this?

Yet the need of a king had been recognized before, and illustrated by the terrible recitals at the end of Judges. Man being what he is, grace as seen in the priesthood will not accomplish by itself the end of righteousness. "Let favor (grace) be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly. . . . When Thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 10, 9.) The centralization of power in one hand strong enough to maintain this has always been a necessity, and in Christian times is seen as much as ever. But where is the man that shall unite power and righteousness after this fashion? Thus the world still waits for the reign of Christ.

The people's choice of the king is shown in Saul; God's choice in David: He too fails, and becomes but the type and prophet of Another in whom prophet, priest and king are united, and the divine and human kingdoms become one also.

There are six divisions:—

1. (Chap. i.–vii.) Samuel: the prophet as the agent of the Divine Sovereignty.
2. (Chap. viii.–xv.) Saul: the people's saviour.
3. (Chap. xvi.–2 Sam. ix.) David, the man after God's own heart.
4. (2 Sam. x.–xii.) His failure also.
5. (Chap. xiii.–xxi. 14.) The Divine Throne vindicates itself.
6. (Chap. xxi. 15–xxiv.) Overcoming.

# SAMUEL.

## DIVISION 1. (1 Sam. i.–vii.)

*Samuel: the Representative of the Divine Sovereignty.*

(1 Sam. I.–II. 10.)

Birth and origin. 1. (i. 1–8.) The barren woman.

1. [1] NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-Zophim, of [a]Mount Ephraim, and his name was [b]Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. And he had [c]two wives; the name of the

[a] Judg. 19. 1. ch. 9. 4.
[b] 1 Chr. 6. 16, 22, 27.
[c] Gen. 29. 27, 28. *cf.* Gal. 4. 21–27.

### NOTES.

#### Div. 1.

Samuel the prophet fittingly introduces the story of the kings,—fittingly crowns the first kings himself. He is the representative of the higher throne from which alone they derive their authority. The prophet (see Deut xviii. 15, sq., notes), as such, chosen from any class among the people, raised up of God as needed, not deriving his office from any of his predecessors, but from God alone, necessarily expresses the sovereign will of God. Samuel, in the circumstances of his birth, peculiarly does this; still more, under those in which he is brought forward by the Spirit of God, when the priesthood has failed, and the ark is no more sought after, and he has alone to stand in the terrible gap thus made.

But he is also thus the witness of the divine sufficiency. All else has failed, but God has not failed. In the very lowest estate, the Ichabod of the nation, Samuel, with nothing to help or accredit him except that God who spake into his ear, lifts up the nation into triumph and blessing.

And here a new title of God is found, which, in connection with those related and contrasted "kingdoms," which in the Septuagint give such fitting title to the books, claims for the divine not merely supremacy but totality of power. This is "Jehovah of Hosts," or "Jehovah, God of Hosts": where there is no need to speculate whether stars or angels, or even the hosts of Israel, are intended. "The God of Hosts" claims all these for Him. In this title the divine kingdom reveals itself in contrast with all others, which are sustained or confounded as they move in subjection to it or not. Thus the moral of the book is given at the opening of it.

1. Samuel's origin and birth are carefully given to us: we may be sure, not as matters of simply historical interest. What importance, in this case, can we attach to this genealogy of unknown names? Let us remind ourselves that we are in the kingdom of God, where wheel is adjusted to wheel in His chariot of progress. How good it is to be permitted to escape from the babble of the unmeaning into a world like this, where everything is significant! There may be, no doubt, here depths and heights which we cannot explore. Still we are encouraged onward, and at every step gain something in view. How wonderful are these Scripture histories in this way, as making us aware everywhere of the pervasive presence of the Almighty and All-wise!

(i.) Nothing, in fact, could be much simpler than is Samuel's genealogy here, or the steps by which we reach the Nazarite prophet. Reading the five names in reverse order, and remembering that we have thus to read the numerical order also backwards, we find in the fifth place, under the number of responsibility, Zuph, "the watcher," or "observer." It is the only name of which the mean-

one Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had [d] no children. And this man went up out of his city from year to year, to [e] worship and sacrifice unto Jehovah of Hosts in Shiloh; and there the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests unto Jehovah. And it was so, on the day that Elkanah [f] sacrificed, he gave portions to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters; but to Hannah he gave a double portion, for he [g] loved Hannah; but Jehovah had shut up her womb. And her adversary [h] provoked her sore also, to make her fret, because Jehovah had shut up her womb. And [as] he did so year by year, when she

[d] Gen. 11. 30. Gen. 25. 21. Gen. 29. 31. Judg. 13. 2. Lk. 1. 7.
[e] Deut. 16. 1, 2. Lk. 2. 41.
[f] Deut. 12. 17, 18.
[g] Gen. 29. 30.
[h] *cf.* Gen. 16. 4 with Gal. 4. 29.

ing is at all doubtful. Most, perhaps, would render it "honeycomb," the Hebrew word standing for this. On the other hand, the derivation is as simple for the other meaning; and the alternative reading in Chronicles (Zophai in 1 Chr. vi. 26, and Zuph or Ziph in verse 35), with its presumed connection with Ramathaim-*zophim*, leads us back to the former, also. In its spiritual connection, certainly, to be an "observer" in the sphere of responsibility is the beginning of all blessings. Zuph is an Ephrathite, therefore "fruitful"; and we cannot wonder that his son Tohu, under the number of experience, speaks of being "low, sunk down,"—humiliation; and this being ever the way of blessing and of the knowledge of the Lord, the next name, under the number of manifestation, is Elihu, "my God"—or my Mighty One—"is He." Still, in the way of progress, and under the salvation number, we have then Jeroham, "he is tenderly loved"; and we end here, under that of obedience and divine sovereignty, with Elkanah, whom "God has purchased," or "acquired." How easily, of such a stock as this, comes forth a Samuel!

Elkanah's town is that of Samuel afterwards,—Ramah, or ha-Ramah, "the height." The name we have had elsewhere, but not the place, which here we find in its full title to have been Ramathaim-zophim, "the two heights of the watchers." The prophet's place was always that of a watcher, and the prophet's face always toward the slowly coming dawn; and the "height" is in natural connection with the place: those who are in it are, by that very fact, lifted up out of the world. All this is in perfect keeping with Samuel's association with Ramah. For us, also, the connection of the dawn with the kingdom for which still we wait is necessary and obvious: but why "*two* heights"? May it not be that there is the *positional* height of our place in Christ, of which other Ramahs have already spoken to us (pp. 133, 150), and the *spiritual* elevation answering to this? Certainly God has thus provided for the Elkanahs, His "purchased" ones to-day; and this is the place for a Samuel—should there be any now—to exercise the judge's office in Israel. For any right judgment of things at large, the coming of the Lord must be before us, we must be watchers for Him! Is not the state of Christendom, and the cause of that state also, depicted in His own words,—"but if that evil servant shall say, in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken" (Matt. xxiv. 48, 49)? How unutterably solemn the warning that follows!

We are next told of Elkanah's two wives, who repeat in some respects the story of Sarah and Hagar. If Sarah be, as we have seen in its place, the principle of grace, the very name of Hannah is "grace." And she, too, is naturally a barren woman. Peninnah differs, however, in many ways, from Hagar. She is no bondwoman, and would not seem to stand for the principle of law; but is, on the other hand, the "adversary" of her rival, which could not in the same way be said of Hagar. Similarly she flourishes while Hannah is barren, but grows feeble after she has become fruitful. Her name, Peninnah, is of doubtful mean-

went up to the house of Jehovah, so she provoked her: and she wept and did not [i]eat. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am I not better to thee than ten sons?

[i] Gen. 30. 1.

2. (9-18.) The covenant of separation in contrast with the declining priesthood.

[2]And Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. And Eli the priest sat upon the seat by the door-post of the house of Jehovah. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore. And she [j]vowed a vow, and said, Jehovah of Hosts, if thou wilt look indeed upon the affliction of thy handmaid, and wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no [k]razor come upon his head. And so it was, as she continued praying before Jehovah, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah, she was speaking in her heart; only her lips were moving, and her voice was not heard; and Eli thought that she was drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? [l]put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before Jehovah. Count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial; for out of the abundance of my grief and provocation have I spoken hitherto. And Eli an-

[j] Num. 30. 3-16.

[k] Judg. 16. 17. Num. 6. 5. Lk. 1. 15. *cf.* Ps. 16.1, with Heb. 2. 13.

[l] *cf.* ch. 3. 2. with ch.14. 24–45. *cf.* Ezek.13. 22.

ing, but probably signifies "shining, glittering"; and she may represent the earthly objects which so easily distract the heart even of Christians from that which should alone hold it. Would that Elkanah's bigamy were less easily to be applied to Christians! That it was openly indulged as lawful, instead of marring, this does in fact only make the lesson more forcible: "happy is he who condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth." After all, Elkanah *did* love Hannah: but grace cannot be reconciled to a barren love without fruit.

(ii.) No wonder if the going up to worship the Lord always provokes afresh this sorrow. But now she can bear it no longer: out it bursts in a vow of Nazariteship — of separation to the Lord — of the child she covets. Would that all brought forth from us, even by grace, had thus the sign of consecration to God upon its head, the confession of entire dependence upon Him attached to that which is brought forth!

The last of the judges, Samson, who had "begun" to deliver Israel from the Philistines, had been, as we know, a Nazarite also; and we have seen (p. 239) the meaning of this. Here that alone is particularized in which Samson had so signally failed. How easily the strong man fails in this grace of dependence just by reason of his strength! Samuel is, in fact, the very opposite of Samson. If anything more than another characterizes him it is the spirit of prayer. Was he not himself the fruit of it? Is not that which is brought forth from us all naturally the incarnation, so to speak, of the spirit in which it has been conceived?

The first glimpse of the priest here is already a sad one. Eli, meaning "high," or "exalted," expresses the moral condition of the priesthood, as we are shortly to be made to see. Personally he had a heart for the Lord, but not sufficiently to stand for Him; and with him the whole order to which he belongs is becoming decrepit. His spiritual sense is blunt, as is his nature. He cannot discern the character of the sorrowing woman before him; sees, indeed, but the

swered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thy servant find grace in thine eyes. And the woman [m]went her way, and ate, and her countenance was no more [sad].

3. (19–11. 10.) The realization.

3 (*a*) And they rose up early in the morning, and worshiped before Jehovah, and returned and came to their house, to Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and Jehovah [n]remembered her. And it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, [saying] Because I had asked him of Jehovah.

*a* (1. 19, 20.) The birth of Samuel.

(*b*) And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer the yearly sacrifice to Jehovah, and his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said, [Not] until the child be [o]weaned; then will I bring him that he may appear before Jehovah, and there [p]abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what is good in thine eyes: tarry till thou hast weaned him; Jehovah indeed [q]establish his word! And the woman abode, and gave her son suck till she had weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three [r]bullocks and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of

*b* (1. 21–28.) Weaned for service, and presented.

*m* Neh. 8. 10. Eccl. 9. 7. *cf.* Jno. 4. 50.

*n* Gen. 30. 22. *cf.* Heb. 6. 15.

*o* Gen. 21. 8. Ps. 131.

*p* Ex. 33. 11. *cf.* Ps. 27. 4.

*q* 2 Sam. 7. 25.

*r cf.* Ex. 29. 1, etc.

moving of lips, and misconstrues it; pronounces a judgment which has speedily to be recalled. Yet this awakens in him no self-judgment, no discernment of his own levity: and this we shall find in Eli all the way through.

The ordered way of blessing is being closed up, and God is finding new channels for His grace to be poured into. Such is His way; for His grace must not lack expression while the need is there that demands it. The cry of distress may be misinterpreted, even by His people; but His own ear cannot be stopped.

(iii.) We come immediately, therefore, to the realization of this: Samuel is born, and named by his mother "heard of God." What she says is evidently not the interpretation of the name, but the reason for her giving it him. The name speaks of God as *El*, the Mighty One, who in might has answered her; the reason speaks of *Jehovah*. Indeed, how much *beyond* her prayer has been the answer! For she does not appear to have looked on to this child becoming, as he does, the deliverer of Israel. Perhaps she never lives to see him in this character. God acts in the fullness of His own love and wisdom; and what a light will eternity throw upon the issue of our prayers!

Samuel is born to be in a peculiar way the servant of the Lord; but he must be weaned before he can become this, and we cannot refrain from thinking upon the one hundred and thirty-first psalm here: "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, even as a child is weaned from his mother; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child." That is, says Perowne, "As a weaned child no longer cries, frets, and longs for the breast, but lies still and is content, because it is with its mother, so my soul is weaned from all discontented thoughts, from all fretful desires of earthly good, waiting in stillness upon God, finding its satisfaction in His presence, resting peacefully in His arms." This surely is what is required for proper service: the childlike spirit, but the spirit of a *weaned* child. Alas, how few, proportionately, of the professed servants of Christ have attained to this!

The weaning accomplished, Samuel is taken and presented to the Lord, with a bullock for a burnt-offering. The type of whole-hearted consecration in service is easily to be read in this; but it is Christ of whom it speaks, in whom alone

wine, and brought him to Jehovah's house, to Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slaughtered the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, to pray unto Jehovah. For [s]this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath granted me the petition that I asked of him: therefore have I also given him to Jehovah: all the days that he liveth he is given to Jehovah. And he worshiped Jehovah there.

c. (ii. 1-10.) Hannah's song of resurrection and the anointed.

(*c*) And Hannah [t]prayed and said:—
My heart [u]exulteth in Jehovah;
My [v]horn is exalted in Jehovah;
My mouth is opened wide over mine [w]enemies,
Because I rejoice in [x]thy salvation.
There is [y]none holy as Jehovah,
For there is none beside thee,
And there is no [z]rock like our God.
Do not multiply, [do not] speak [a]pride! pride!
Let not loose talk come from your mouth!
For a God of [b]omniscience is Jehovah,
And by him actions are [c]weighed.
The [d]bows of the mighty are broken,
And they that [e]stumbled are girded with strength;
They that were [f]full have hired themselves for bread.
And the hungry are [so] no more:

[s] *cf.* Ps. 116. 1, 2 with Deut. 26. 1-11.
[t] Lk. 1. 68, etc.
[u] Lk. 1. 46. Ps. 34. 2.
[v] Ps. 92. 10.
[w] *cf.* Ps. 9. 6.
[x] Ex. 14. 13.
[y] Ex. 15. 11.
[z] Deut 32. 30.
[a] 2 Sam. 22. 28.
[b] *ctr.* Ps. 73. 11.
[c] *cf.* Dan. 6. 27.
[d] Ps. 46. 8, 9.
[e] Mi. 7. 8.
[f] Lk. 1. 53. Lk. 18. 14.

servant and service can be accepted of God. He who serves best will be most conscious of this. The servant, too, to serve aright, must be trained up in the sanctuary. There alone we can get clear eyes for it, and the light of heaven. So, as we will remember, the Levites were given to the priests; and the book of the Sanctuary, Leviticus, precedes the wayside service of the book of Numbers. The last words of the chapter refer, I suppose, and as the connection would imply, to Samuel. He would be, according to the commentators, about three years old, which in Palestine would be, however, proportionately older than with us.

Hannah's heart is full, and bursts out in prophetic song, in which God's ways with her are expanded into general principles, which, in the end, are applied to the purification and blessing of the earth under God's King — Messiah. The king and the kingdom thus are introduced at the beginning of the book, and yet go beyond David or any successor of his in the days that immediately follow, and take in the whole breadth of the earth, and the final rule of Christ over it.

The song has four parts,— the first of which celebrates as the God of her salvation the faithful, omnipotent, and omniscient God (verses 1–3). Her heart is joyful, her strength is raised up, her mouth utters boldly her challenge to all enemies. Jehovah is her joy and exultation: for it is He who has become her Saviour. None is holy as He; nay, none can be put beside Him: the rock is a faint image of His faithfulness, who is not simply *her* — but "our" — God. Well may man's pride be abased, and the loose ungoverned speech hushed before Him: for all knowledge is His, and actions are weighed by Him.

The second is the salvation part (verses 4, 5),— which includes in it, also, the humbling of the adversaries. The bows of the mighty are broken: their weapons of war are no more; they that stumbled for very weakness, are, on the other hand, given a strength that girds or braces them up for activity. They that were full to satiety with bread have now to hire themselves out to obtain it, while the hungry now are in turn filled. Now she comes to her own case,

So that the [g]barren hath borne seven,
And she that had many children is grown feeble.
Jehovah [h]killeth and maketh alive;
He bringeth down to Sheol and bringeth up;
Jehovah [i]maketh poor and maketh rich,
He bringeth low, he also lifteth up;
He [j]raiseth up the poor out of the dust;
From the dunghill lifteth up the needy,
To set them among [k]nobles,
And he maketh them inherit a throne of glory.
For the [l]pillars of the earth are Jehovah's,
And he hath set the world upon them.
He [m]keepeth the feet of his saints,
And the [n]wicked are silent in darkness,
For by strength shall [o]no man prevail.
They that [p]strive with Jehovah shall be broken in pieces,
Out of heaven shall he [q]thunder upon them;
Jehovah shall [r]judge the ends of the earth;
And shall give strength unto his [s]king,
And exalt the horn of his [t]anointed.

g Ps. 113. 9. cf. Heb. 11. 12.
h Deut. 32. 39. Hos. 6. 1.
i Job. 1. 21.
j 2Sam. 23. 1. Ps. 113. 7, 8.
k Job 36. 7. cf. 1 Jno. 3. 1, 2.
l cf. Col. 1. 17. cf. Heb. 1. 3.
m Ps. 121. 3.
n Ps. 146. 9.
o cf. 2 Cor. 12. 7–10.
p Is. 45. 9.
q 2 Sam. 22. 14.
r cf. Matt. 25. 31–46.
s Ps. 20. 9. Ps. 21. 1. Ps. 45. Ps. 72.
t cf. Ps. 89. 20–29 with Acts 2. 29, 30.

though not, of course, in the details: the barren has borne seven, and she that has borne many is grown feeble.

These, of course, are simply specimen deliverances; but we have to go further to find the full thought, and that *resurrection* is a principle of the Lord's ways: he is the God of resurrection. That He should abase pride and destroy the wicked, that is easy to understand; but resurrection means that for the righteous also the way of life must be first of all a way of death. Pride in *them*, also, must be abased: they must learn in themselves what man is, and the righteous penalty for what he is; in the prostration of human strength they must learn the power and grace that consist with holiness in the Lord's salvation. So now the third part (verses 6–8 *a*):—

Jehovah kills and makes alive, too: He brings down to Hades, and brings up out of it. And from the poor and needy—from the dunghill itself—He lifts up those that He makes His princes, and sets on a throne of glory.

These principles are of the widest application, and will receive the widest application in a coming day, when the strife between good and evil shall be coming to a final end: and this is the thought of the fourth part (verses 8*b*–10):—

For the pillars of the earth belong to Jehovah: that is, the foundations of the dry land which are set up in the deep, and upon which the world that men inhabit stands. All that sustains the present condition of things, she tells us, depends upon the will of Jehovah, unchangeably holy as He is. Thus these principles will finally and everywhere prevail. "He keepeth the feet of His saints, and the wicked are silent in darkness [such is the day that is rapidly drawing near]: for by strength shall no man prevail. They that strive with Jehovah shall be broken in pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them; [now we see the day in its broad features]: Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth; and shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed."

Here is plainly the day of Christ; and the regeneration of the earth will exhibit fully all these principles. Israel must herself go down into the depths, and come up in resurrection. All the pride of man shall be abased, and the Lord alone exalted in that day. To this Hannah, with her prophetic eyes, looks on, and the whole of the "books of the kingdoms." How clearly is their character marked by the song of this Israelite woman!

(II. 11-36.)

The degradation of the priesthood in contrast with the true servant.

1. (11.) A new beginning.

2. (12-17.) The sin of the priests.

2. [1]And Elkanah went to Ramah, to his house. And the child [u]ministered to Jehovah before Eli the priest.

[2]Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial: they [v]knew not Jehovah. And the priest's custom with the people was, when any one [w]offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was being cooked, with a three-pronged flesh-hook in his hand, and struck it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot: all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took of it. So did they in Shiloh to all the Israelites that came thither. Even before they [x]burned the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; and he will not take sodden flesh of thee, but raw. If the man said unto him, They will surely burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth, then he would say, Nay, but thou shalt give it now; and if not, I will take it by [y]force. And the sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah; for men [z]abhorred the offering of Jehovah.

u ch. 3. 1.

v Jer. 9. 3. Mal 2.1-10.

w *ctr.* Lev. 7. 8. Ex. 29. 26.

x Ex. 23. 18. Lev. 3. 3-5.

y *cf.* Is 28.7. Jer.5.30,31. *ctr.* Heb. 2. 17.

z *cf.* Is. 1.11.

2. We have now put before us, in manifestly contrasted paragraphs, the degradation of the priesthood and the rise of the prophet that is soon to be. God has thus provided that the link between Himself and His people should not be snapped even in the awful disaster that is about to overtake them. How good is He, and how righteous in His goodness! Yet how easily may we mistake Him, too! He who would judge with God must not judge by the appearance: the moral and spiritual are the only means of it; and this must seem a thing so evident as to need no enforcement; yet the apostle did not think so, and the history of Christianity in every generation shows abundantly the need.

The moral degradation of the priesthood is here shown as complete. The mercy of God warns repeatedly, in vain, of impending judgment. Eli is morally weak; his sons utterly profane; and alas, the people, save a small remnant, are away from God. Many are the lessons of such a contrast as is here presented to us.

(i.) This one verse, with its simple statement, may seem too insignificant altogether to form even the smallest section. But even this may serve to point a moral in such a connection as this. God concerns Himself with what is little: yea, there is nothing that is too little for Him. And here was a fresh affirmation in this new beginning,—His power to exalt and to abase, His refusal of evil wherever found, and the individuality also of each soul with Him. What a gospel in the Old Testament for children is in the notice and acceptance of this little child! A little child this, that ministered not to Eli merely but to Jehovah, and finding his record in the inspired Word!

(ii.) In contrast with Samuel's service is now shown us the sin of the priests, a profanity which, in its essential features, has been often enough repeated since. External nearness to God, without the knowledge of Him, has ever been the occasion of the worst departures from Him. To one away from the sanctuary some sense of the divine would naturally more attach to it, which in the daily intercourse with sacred things tends more and more to pass away. Eli's sons are thus practisers and preachers of a godlessness which at first shocks and then communicates itself to the people round. A holiness that is but external is the worst unholiness. Here nothing but the rites remained to speak of God; but even these were impiously violated by the rude hands of those whose duty it was to lead men in obedience. Shamelessly and openly they made themselves fat with the offerings of Jehovah's people, and that with violence which defied Him to His face.

3. (18–21.) The commencing manifestation of the man of God.

[3]And Samuel ministered before Jehovah, a child girded with a linen ephod. And his mother made him a little [a]robe, and brought it to him year by year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, Jehovah give thee seed of this woman in return for the gift that was asked of Jehovah. And they went to their own house. And Jehovah visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bare [b]three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before Jehovah.

a Gen. 37. 3. *cf.* Eph. 6. 4.

b *cf.* Matt. 13. 12.

4. (22–26.) The weakness and failure of the high priest.

[4]And Eli was very [c]old, and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and that they lay with the women that did service at the [d]door of the tent of meeting. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things?

c ch. 8. 1. *ctr.* Deut. 34. 7.

d *cf.* Exod. 38. 8.

(iii.) The narrative returns, after this recital, which has shown the moral state leading to the collapse of the priesthood shortly in Israel, to show us Samuel, clothed anticipatively with the priestly ephod. This was, as we have seen (Ex. xxviii. 5–14, *n.*), essentially the shoulder-piece, and which held (in the case of the high-priest) the breastplate also. Girt about the person, it was the expression of a service whereby the people of God were sustained before God in a love which never forgot that which was due to Him. It was the mediator's robe, and the priests were thus characterized as those who "wore a linen ephod." (ch. xxii. 18.) No other did this besides the priest,* except here Samuel, and upon one great occasion (2 Sam. vi. 14) David, and these two cases are strictly parallel: in each it showed that the burden of Israel's maintenance before God had devolved upon the person wearing the ephod.

It is true that the materials were different: there was here no beauty of various color, nor gold, as in the high-priest's dress, the full blossom of the priestly. But on the other hand, the simple white linen† was that in which the priest went on the day of atonement into the holiest of all, and speaks of the absolute purity fit for the presence of Him who dwells in the sanctuary. Thus, while it points to Christ, the antitype all through here,—priest, prophet, king, alike,—it clearly marks the contrast between the man of God's choice and the licentious priesthood that gives way to him.

The coat, which year by year his mother brings to him, is in harmony with this. It is the *meil*, which was also part of the high-priest's dress, the "robe" of the ephod, although kings, nobles, and others wore it also. The robe of the high-priest, like the ephod, had its distinctive characters; as to that of Samuel we have nothing told us: the connection, however, cannot well be doubted. The ephod must have been furnished by the sanctuary; and thus two witnesses united here their testimony to him. The higher kingdom was thus already manifesting itself.

Hannah also, significant in her name and history, as we have seen, now becomes fruitful. She has three more sons,—four sons, therefore, and two daughters, the presage of the triumph of divine grace. None the less must the holiness of God's ways be affirmed, and the corruption of the priesthood have its answer in judgment. But "Samuel grew before Jehovah."

(iv.) The further fact is now developed that, the priesthood being such as we have seen, there is no power over them to stand for God, and restrain the evil. Eli is in the threefold relation to these wanton transgressors of father, high-priest, and judge in Israel; but he does nothing but expose his incapacity. Nor is it mere age that can account for this. It is significant that for the contempt

* Samuel is shown, in the book of Chronicles, to have been, by descent, a Levite (1 Chron. vi. 33–35); and thus, it has been asserted, could wear the ephod; but we have no hint in Scripture of the Levites doing this, but the opposite.

† As here, *bad* is the word for linen.

for I hear of your evil deeds from all this people.
[e] Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear: ye cause Jehovah's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, God shall judge him; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall entreat for him? But they [f] hearkened not to their father's voice, for Jehovah had in mind to slay them.

And the child Samuel grew on, and was in [g] favor, both with Jehovah and also with men.

5. (27-36.) The sentence of God.

[5] And there came a [h] man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah: Did I plainly reveal myself unto thy father's house when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house, and [i] choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto thy father's house all the [j] offerings by fire of the children of Israel? Why trample ye upon my sacrifice, and upon my offerings which I have commanded [in my] habitation? And thou [k] honorest thy sons above me, making yourselves fat with the best of every offering of Israel my people. Wherefore Jehovah the God

e *cf.* ch.3.13.
f Ex. 7. 13, etc. Prov. 29. 1.
g Lk. 2. 52.
h Judg. 6. 8.
i Ex. 28. 1. Num. 17. 1-11.
j Num. 18. 8-20.
k *cfr.* Ex. 32. 26-29. Deut. 33. 9.

of Jehovah's ordinances, which has been already before us, we do not even hear of a rebuke. When to this is added the immorality so naturally connecting itself with it, Eli argues with them and protests, but that is all. He uses not the rod which is put into his hands, and which might have even saved his sons themselves. He leaves them to go unchecked to the divine judgment which he foresees, but does nothing effective to avert; and, in fact, the judgment comes upon them.

Again Samuel is noticed, briefly but in comprehensive contrast. The record anticipates what, long after, is said of the Lord in His childhood, that he grew up in favor both with Jehovah and with men. He is thus every way the opposite of the God-forsaken priests. Though but a child, he is uncontaminated with the evil in the presence of which he grows up, a witness of the individuality that belongs to us, though amid a multitude, and apart even from the restraint and discipline of home. He is a child, but thus with his inheritance in the future, while the priesthood is failing and passing away.

(v.) The sentence upón Eli and his house is now pronounced. Of "the man of God" who now comes forward to utter it we know nothing more,—not even his name. The sentence is a decree of degradation for degradation, with the cutting off of Hophni and Phinehas, the chief offenders. God would raise up for Himself a faithful priest to walk before His anointed,—a second intimation of the coming kingdom. Joshua had stood before Eleazar (Num. xxvii. 21); and, for the time, the high priest had had the foremost place in Israel. This is to be changed, and even the "faithful priest" is to walk before the king. Priesthood has failed to maintain the link between God and His people. Now the king is to be the link, although he, too, will fail and pass: only the "threefold cord" of prophet, priest, and king, as found in Christ, will not be broken; and power put into *His* hand cannot fail or be forfeited any more. Toward this all these types point, though Christ is not directly spoken of here. The "faithful priest" was raised up in Zadok, as the representative of the line of Phinehas and Eleazar: Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, Aaron's fourth son, and not of Eleazar, who thus for a time had lost the high-priesthood promised to Phinehas forever (Num. xxv. 13.) Phinehas has thus the promise fulfilled to him, as it were, in resurrection and abidingly: in the kingdom yet to come, the sons of Zadok will again keep charge of the sanctuary. (Ezek. xliv. 15.)

of Israel saith, I said indeed, Thy house and thy father's house should walk before me forever; but now Jehovah saith, Be it far from me: for [l] them that honor me will I honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come that I will [m] cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, so that there shall not be an old man in thy house. And thou shalt see straitness of dwelling-place amid all that doeth good to Israel; and there shall not be an [n] old man in thy house for ever. And the man of thine [whom] I shall not cut off from mine altar [shall be] to cause thine eyes to fail and grieve thy soul, and all the increase of thy house shall die in their vigor. And this shall be the sign unto thee, which shall come upon thy two sons, upon Hophni and Phinehas: in [o] one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a [p] faithful priest, who shall do all that which is in my heart and in my soul, and I will build him a [q] sure house, and he shall walk before mine anointed continually. And it shall be that any one that is left of thy house shall come and crouch to him for a small piece of silver, and a loaf of bread, and shall say, [r] Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread.

l *cf.* ch. 15. 10–31.
m ch. 4. 17. 1 Ki. 2. 27.
n *cfr.* Ps. 91. 16. Heb. 7. 24.
o ch. 4. 11.
p Heb. 3. 2.
q Heb. 3. 6. 2Sam. 7. 16.
r Lev. 21. 22.

The Prophet manifest. 1. (*vv.* 1–9.) Samuel's Call.

(III.)

3. [1] And the child Samuel [s] ministered to Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was [t] precious in those days: the vision was not spread abroad. And it came

s ch. 2. 18.
t Ps. 74. 9. *cf.* Am. 8. 11.

Through all, the typical meaning distinctly shines: for God throughout is thinking of His Son. Eleazar, as we have seen fully elsewhere, is as Aaron's *third* son,—in whom, also, after the death of Nadab and Abihu, the priesthood revives,—the distinct type of Christ as a *risen* Priest, whose intercessory place is the fruit of His work accomplished. His resurrection *means* the acceptance of His atoning death; and thus He is Eleazar, the true "help of God" for His dependent people.

Ithamar, the *fourth* son of Aaron, as that, and according to his name, "where the palm is," implies a practical righteousness, which is connected with practical walk. Now as long as Eleazar retained the high priesthood, Ithamar could serve in his lower place well and acceptably, for "to do good and to communicate," and thus the whole Christian life, are "sacrifices," which, as priests, we are called to offer up to God. But these are entirely dependent upon that one only *propitiatory* sacrifice which Eleazar, the risen priest, reminds us of. Let Ithamar displace Eleazar, then Ithamar himself loses himself hopelessly. Eli, the "exalted," Hophni, "my fist," and quite another Phinehas, "mouth of brass," from the one of the higher line, sufficiently characterize the history here; while the line of Eleazar, when it revives revives in Zadok, "the righteous one,"—*righteousness in the right line and Person*, "Jesus Christ, the righteous,"—and all is again secured.

Precious it is to see Israel's sorrowful history written in golden letters such as these! Thus the higher kingdom is in action all through the book, not merely in the lives of individuals, but in the ordering of the state at large. Unto it the lower, when it comes, must be in complete subjection, representing it in character truly among men, or pay the forfeit.

3. The priesthood being thus adjudged, we now find the prophet openly brought forward, God thus providing that there should be no lapse on His side,

to pass at that time, when Eli was lying down in his place, (now his eyes began to grow [u]dim, so that he could not see,) and the [v]lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel lay in the house of Jehovah where the ark of God was, that Jehovah [w]called Samuel. And he said, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I did not call; lie down again; and he went and lay down. And Jehovah called again, Samuel! And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I did not call, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not [x]yet recognize Jehovah, and the word of Jehovah was not yet revealed to him. And Jehovah called Samuel again the [y]third time. And he arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah was calling the child. And Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down, and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, [z]Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth. And Samuel went and lay down in his place.

u *cf.* ch. 2. 22.
v Ex. 27. 20, 21. *cf.* 2 Chr. 29. 6, 7.
w Num. 7. 89. *cf.* Is. 6. 8, 9. Jer. 1. 5, 6.
x *cf.* ch. 2. 12
y *cf.* Jno. 21. 14-17.
z *cf.* Gen. 22. 1, 11.

2. (10-18.) The announcement.

[2]And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. And Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth. And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I [a]do a thing in Israel at which both ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from beginning to end. For I have declared to him that I will [b]judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, [c]because his sons made

a 2 Ki. 21. 12.
b ch. 2. 31. *cf.* Ezek. 9. 5, 6.
c *ctr.* Gen. 18. 19. *cf.* Prov. 19. 18.

fail as all else may. Samuel is therefore now called, and established before all Israel as the mouthpiece of Jehovah to them, before the predicted judgment falls upon Eli's house.

(i.) The call comes suddenly at night, when men are asleep, but not the Shepherd of Israel. The dim eyes of the priest, the suggested near failure of the tabernacle-lamp, are no mere embellishments of the picture. Such was the state of things which necessitated the new interposition of the Lord. Eli was there in his place, but the Voice addresses not Eli,—not even though the message concerns him intimately and sadly. For the face of God is averted from him.

To Samuel we find the Voice is something audible,—not a simple intimation or impression on the heart. It is, at the same time, very *human:* the youth imagines it is Eli that is speaking; and that three times over, for he has not yet learned to recognize Jehovah. Eli himself is thus made also to understand that He is speaking, before the subject of the communication is made known to him, —though his heart, as we see afterwards, presages but too well.

Yet this divine-human Voice, how sweet it is! In all dispensations it is the same. Calling one, too, by one's name, for by name He knows His sheep. But may *we* not also, like Samuel here, mistake the voice divine because it is so human,—expect it as afar off, miss it because it is nigh?

(ii.) The message confirms the previously announced doom of Eli's house. But what need to repeat again what had already been so fully said? Is not once said enough for God? Does it not imply that God yet waits, even though the thing is said, upon man's repentance?—expects men to cry to Him, to give Him, as it were, opportunity to repent? Why should He warn at all, if not for this?

themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And
therefore have I sworn unto the house of Eli, that the
iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged by sacrifice
or offering for ever. And Samuel lay until the morn-
ing, and opened the doors of Jehovah's house. And
Samuel feared to tell the vision to Eli. And Eli called
Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here
am I. And he said, What is the word that he hath
spoken to thee? I pray thee, [d]hide it not from me. God
do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from
me of all that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him
all the words, and hid nothing from him. And he said,
[e]It is Jehovah: let him do what is good in his eyes.

3. (iii. 19–iv. 1.) Jehovah reveals Himself through Samuel.

[3]And Samuel [f]grew, and Jehovah was with him, and
let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel,
from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was
established to be a [g]prophet of Jehovah. And Jehovah
continued to appear in Shiloh: for Jehovah revealed
himself unto Samuel in Shiloh in the word of Jehovah.
And the word of Samuel came unto all Israel.

(IV.)

Collapse.

1. (*vv.* 1–11.) A vain promise, and an unchanging God.

4. [1]And Israel went out against the [h]Philistines to bat-
tle, and encamped beside Ebenezer; and the Philis-
tines encamped in Aphek. And the Philistines put
themselves in array against Israel: and the battle
spread; and Israel was [i]routed before the Philistines,
and they smote in battle array in the field about four

[d] ch. 2. 27, etc.
[e] Is. 39. 5–8.
[f] ch. 2. 26.
[g] ch. 9. 9. *cf.* Acts. 3. 24.
[h] Judg. 13. 1, etc.
[i] Deut. 28. 25.

But Eli, though he bows under God's hand, does not turn to Him after this fashion. His spiritual sense is dulled, so that he cannot discern the undertone of pity in the threatening wrath; nor has he energy to take up the authority intrusted to him, and act for Him whom he has so long ignored. Thus judgment takes its course.

Samuel, though with a natural fear in which different elements would unite together, approves himself as able to stand for God, and tells him all. His first message is of evil, and to those with whom he has grown up. It is needed, perhaps, for himself, in view of the place that he is to take in the crisis at hand. And though he fears, he does not listen to his fears, nor refuse the burden laid upon him, but bears it faithfully.

(iii.) Thus Jehovah is with him, and his prophecy finds a wider field. Jehovah reveals himself through Samuel; and thus, on the very eve of judgment, appeal is made anew to the hearts and consciences of the people. It did not avail to prevent disaster; but it did surely to maintain faith in a remnant, and bring some hearts to the living God. But whatever might be the result as to the people, God at least glorified Himself in goodness, as He ever does, and has left us as witnesses of a love, which to us, indeed, has been how much more wonderfully displayed!

4. (i.) But now the day of inevitable ruin comes, and Israel is smitten before the Philistines. It would seem by the language as if Israel had provoked the conflict. In striking contrast, and yet in as plain congruity, with what takes place afterward, we are told that they encamped beside Ebenezer, doubly emphasized by two articles, "the stone of the help." Samuel, we know, actually set up the stone afterwards in commemoration of victory; and this makes the anticipative mention of the name so significant. According to the unchanging nature of God occurred the victory then, the defeat now. Self-confidence goes

thousand men. And the people came into the camp; and the elders of Israel said, [j]Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch unto us the [k]ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of Shiloh, and when it comes into our midst it shall save us out of the hand of our enemies. And the people sent to Shiloh, and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth between the [l]cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And it came to pass, when the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, that all Israel [m]shouted with a great shout, so that the earth shook. And the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, and they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of Jehovah was come into the camp. And the Philistines were [n]afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe to us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe to us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? [o]these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness. Be strong, yea, be men, ye Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been servants unto you; be men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was [p]routed, and they fled every man to his tent; and the slaughter was very great, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was [q]taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, [r]died.

*j* Josh. 7. 11, 12.
*k* ch. 14. 18. Josh. 3. 3–8, 11–17. Josh. 6. 4–13 with Nu. 10. 35.
*l* Ex. 25. 18–22. *cf.* Ps. 97. 2. Ps. 99. 1.
*m* 2 Sam. 6. 15.
*n* *cf.* Ex. 15. 14.
*o* Josh. 2. 9–11. Josh. 5. 1.
*p* ver. 2. 2. *cf.* Isa. 1. 4–7.
*q* Ps. 78. 56–64.
*r* ch. 2. 34.

along with departure of heart from Him, as generally is the case, and insures the issue. Once more smitten with considerable loss, they ask indeed why Jehovah has done this. They realize it to be from Him, and yet do not seriously inquire of Him, nor humble themselves in His presence. Stranger than all, they would bring this God who has smitten them, unappeased, into the camp to fight in their behalf! Perhaps their thought is that this very reliance upon the ark will propitiate Him. How vain, in any case, is such a hope! True, it is the "ark of the covenant of Jehovah"; and, as such, they appeal to it. But was there not the "vengeance of the covenant" as faithfully promised as the blessing for obedience? What a sign of disaster that, as it is written, "Hophni and Phinehas," with their already predicted doom hanging over them, "were there with the ark of the covenant of God"!

On the other hand, it is no wonder that the Philistines are as much disconcerted, for the moment, by the presence of the ark, as Israel are encouraged. With them the deity was inseparably connected with the symbols of His worship, and they remembered yet the power displayed in Egypt. Jehovah's witness to Himself there had not been in vain, though men might, after all, refuse it. Alas, they did! Alas, not they alone have done so! So they stiffen themselves in pride, and will be men,—yes, indeed, too surely, "men,"—and are unexpectedly successful: they gain a great victory, slay thirty thousand men, and capture the ark of God itself,—little imagining that they are but fulfilling His word, and instruments in His hand, after all: a lesson in "evidences," which should at least make us careful. Hophni and Phinehas are slain, and the priesthood necessarily collapses, and is for the time set aside.

2. (12–18.) The messenger of death.

[2]And there [s]ran a man of Benjamin out of the ranks, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, behold, Eli sat upon the seat by the way-side, watching; for his heart [t]trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came to tell it in the city, all the city cried out. And Eli heard the sound of the cry, and he said, What meaneth the sound of this tumult? And the man came in haste, and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set, and he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the ranks; even to-day I fled out of the ranks. And he said, What is the matter, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been a great slaughter of the people, and thy two sons also are dead, Hophni and Phinehas, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he [u]fell off from the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for the man was old and heavy; and he had judged Israel [v]forty years.

3. (19–22.) Ichabod.

[3]And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered, and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself, and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And as she was [w]dying, the women that stood by her said, Fear not; for thou hast borne a son. But she did not answer, nor regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The [x]glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.

s 2 Sam. 1. 2. 2 Sam. 18. 19-23. *cfr.* Isa. 52. 7-10.

t *cf.* Ps. 26. 8. *cf.* Ps. 132. 1-8.

u *cf.* Josh. 7. 8.

v Judg. 16. 31.

w Gen. 35. 16-18. *cf.* Eze. 19. 10-14.

x *cf.* Ezek. 10. 4, 18, 19. *cf.* Eze. 11. 22, 23.

(ii.) Eli's death ensues upon the news of the disaster. The circumstantial detail fixes the attention and impresses the heart, and is designed to do so. The old man, who has left the glory of God in the hands of his profligate sons, and let the ark go from him at the will of the people, yet manifests at the last the good that is in him, and is taken away from the evil to come. Shiloh passes also out of the history, and the sanctuary of God from Ephraim, the lesson of which has been already suggested (Josh. xviii. 1, *n.*)

(iii.) A woman's voice pronounces the word of distress, stamping it upon the fruit of her womb, Ichabod, "no glory." This was, indeed, what Israel had brought forth, the fruit of her departure from God: His glory had, in turn, been removed out of their midst. "For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel, so that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men; and delivered His strength into captivity, His glory into the enemy's hand." (Ps. lxxviii. 58–61.) All dooms presage the final doom, and so it is here. The "outer darkness" will be when those who have said to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways," shall have their awful prayer fulfilled! And who can imagine what this means? But "there," we are told, "shall be the wailing and gnashing of teeth."

(V.-VII. 1.)

The creature before the Creator. 1. (v. 1–5.) "God of gods."

5. [1]And the Philistines [y]took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the house of [z]Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was [a]fallen with his face to the earth before the ark of Jehovah. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of Jehovah; and the [b]head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold: only Dagon was left to him. [c]Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread upon Dagon's threshold in Ashdod to this day.

2. (6–12.) The progress of destruction.

[2]And the hand of Jehovah was [d]heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with boils,—Ashdod and its territory. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and [e]upon Dagon our god. And they

y Ps. 78. 61.

z Judg. 16. 23. 1Chron.10. 10.

a Is. 46. 1, 2. Is. 48. 5.

b Is. 42. 8. Jer. 50. 2.

c *cf.* Is. 44. 13–20.

d *cf.* Ex. 3. 19, 20. *ctr.* 2 Sam. 6. 11, 12.

e Ex. 12. 12.

5. The history goes with the ark into the Philistines' land. Their victory becomes their own defeat; which yet, as a testimony to them, might be mercy,—the only mercy that their hostility permitted. They themselves would find, and would have to own, the powerlessness and folly of their idols in the presence of God, with whom they also had to do; although we know of no permanent effect of it, except their restoration of the ark, with offerings for the trespass they had committed.

(i.) The ark is taken to the city of Ashdod, the "spoiler," and put as spoil into the temple of Dagon, the chief Philistine god. Though they know Jehovah's power as a reality, they look at Him as now subdued by the great might of Dagon: for the gods of polytheism could war against one another, as we know. In thus placing it beside their deity, there seems intimated, however, a certain respect. All the more would be their confusion on finding, the next morning, Dagon prostrate upon his face, as if worshipping before the ark. But they are willing to think it an accident, and they replace the idol in its old position. Next morning it is prostrate again, but not to be so easily replaced, for the human parts—the head and hands—of the composite fish-god are cut off, and lying on the threshold, and only the Dagon, the fish-part, is left him. The confusion man has made is thus undone; the human joined to the bestial is seen to be but contemptible and to be trodden under foot, and the creature is prostrate in the presence of the Creator. How well for them, if they had learnt these lessons! Instead of this, where the desecrated head and hands have lain, the worshipers in Ashdod no more dare to step! So little is idolatry a thing of the mind merely, that, face to face with God, they will pick up and reverence their mutilated idol. "When they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." This is the spiritual genealogy of idolatry, wherever it is found. And such is man!

(ii.) The Lord's hand falls, therefore, next upon the Philistines themselves; and they are smitten with boils or tumors, which cannot be, apparently, more clearly defined. As with the similar plague in Egypt (Exod. ix. 8–12, *n.*), the external plague may naturally symbolize and lay bare the inward condition, the

sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they said, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about to Gath. And they [f] carried about the ark of the God of Israel. And it came to pass, after they had carried it about, that the hand of Jehovah was against the city,—there was very great alarm; and he smote the people of the city, both small and great, and boils broke out on them. And they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it was so, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. And they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, [g] Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its place, that it slay us not and our people: for there was mortal alarm in all the city: the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the boils; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

3.(vi.-vii.1.) The return of the ark.

[3] And the ark of Jehovah was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called together the priests and the [h] diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of Jehovah? Tell us wherewith we shall send it to its place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not [i] empty, but return him in any wise a [j] trespass-offering; if then ye shall be healed, it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. And they said, What shall the trespass-offering be that we return him? And they said, According to the number of the lords of the Philistines, five golden [k] boils and five golden mice; for one plague is on you all, and on your lords: so ye shall make images of your boils, and images of your mice that destroy the land, and shall give [l] glory to the God of Israel: [m] peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Why [n] harden ye your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? Did they not, when he wrought wonderfully among them, let the people go, and they departed? And now make a [o] new

f *cf.* Ex. 8. 25-28.

g *cf.* Ex. 12. 31-33.

h Ex. 7. 11, etc.

i Ex. 3. 21. 22.

j *cf.* Lev. 5. 15, 16.

k ch. 5. 6.

l *cf.* Josh. 7. 19-21.

m Ex. 32.30. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 1-10.

n Ex. 14. 17.

o 2 Sa. 6. 2.

corruption which consumes the sinner, and underlies all his departure from God. Unwilling to humble themselves fully under Jehovah's hand, they send the ark about from one place to another, only spreading the evil wherever it goes, until they end the unequal conflict by its restoration to the Israelite territory.

(iii.) Seven months the ark had been in the Philistines' land. At last they call together the priests and diviners, and inquire how they are to send it back. Their advice is to send back with it a trespass-offering, after their heathen fashion, five golden images of their boils, and five golden mice, which were at the same time ravaging their fields. But, after all, they speak somewhat doubtfully, for where will not unbelief find an argument?—and propose an expedient by which it may be tested whether possibly yet it might be a chance that had

cart, and take two milch kine on which hath come [p] no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them. And take the ark of Jehovah, and put it upon the cart, and the golden figures which ye are returning him for a trespass-offering put in the coffer by the side of it, and send it away, that it may go. And see if it go up by the way of his border to Bethshemesh, then it is he that hath done us this great harm; but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that hath smitten us, it was a [q] chance that happened to us.

And the men did so, and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home; and they put the ark of Jehovah upon the cart, and the coffer with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. And the kine went straight forward on the way to Bethshemesh, they went by the one highway, [r] lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Bethshemesh. And [they of] Bethshemesh were reaping the wheat-harvest in the valley; and they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, and [s] rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite, and stood there; and a great stone was there; and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a [t] burnt-offering to Jehovah. And the Levites took down the ark of Jehovah, and the coffer that was with it, wherein were the golden figures, and put them on the great stone. And the men of Bethshemesh offered up burnt-offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices that day unto Jehovah. And the five lords of the Philistines saw it, and returned to Ekron the same day.

And these are the golden tumors that the Philistines returned for a trespass-offering unto Jehovah: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; and the golden mice were according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country-

p *cf.* Jer. 31. 18.

q *cf.* Ex. 14. 5, 6. Is. 26. 11.

r *cf.* Mt. 21. 1–5.

s *ctr.* ch. 4. 5.

t Lev. 1. 3, etc. *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 21.

happened to them. In result it is proved conclusively that Jehovah is the God of Creation, supreme above all the natural instincts: the kine, though unaccustomed to a yoke, take the cart with its sacred burden directly away from where their calves are shut up, even while lowing after them, and take the straight road to Bethshemesh, a priestly city near the Israelite border. There, at the border, they stop, still under the eyes of the Philistine lords, at a great stone upon which the Levites place the ark, and where the kine are offered up a burnt-offering to Jehovah.

Thus the Philistines have Jehovah's sovereignty demonstrated to them in the precise terms which they have themselves chosen,—the goodness of God thus meeting them with what should have turned them from idolatry forever, and brought them to His feet. But they go back, after all, to worship instead the humbled Dagon.

But the men of Bethshemesh also incur divine judgment for their profane

villages, even as far as the great Abel* on which they set down the ark of Jehovah: to this day [it is] in the field of Joshua the Bethshemeshite.

And he [u]smote of the men of Bethshemesh because they had [v]looked into the ark of Jehovah,—he smote even of the people seventy men.† And the people [w]lamented because Jehovah had smitten the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Bethshemesh said, [x]Who can stand before Jehovah, this holy God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have sent back the ark of Jehovah: come down, and [y]fetch it up to you.

And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the ark of Jehovah, and they brought it into the house of [z]Abinadab on the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of Jehovah.

(VII. 2–17.)

The Philistine scourge stayed.

1. (vii. 2–4.) The people serve Jehovah only.

6. [1]And it was so, that from the day that the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim were many days: for it was [a]twenty years. And all the house of Israel [b]lamented after Jehovah. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye return to Jehovah with all your heart, [c]put away the strange gods from among you, and the Ashtoreths, and fix your hearts upon Jehovah, and serve him alone; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. And the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served Jehovah alone.

2. (5–14.) Deliverance.

[2]And Samuel said, Gather all Israel unto [d]Mizpah, and I will pray Jehovah for you. And they gathered

u *cf.* ch. 5. 6. 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7.
v Ex. 40. 20. 1 Kl. 8. 9. with Gal. 3. 10. Ex. 25. 17, 21. with Rom. 3. 25.
w *cf.* Judg. 20. 26.
x Num. 17. 12, 13.
y ch. 5. 8.
z 2 Sam. 6. 3, 4.
a *cf.* ch. 14. 18.
b Judg. 3. 15.
c Gen. 35. 2. Judg. 3. 10.
d Judg. 20. 1. ch. 10. 17.

* The Septuagint reads, "the great *stone*," *eben* for *abel*. This is probable, though others think *abel*, "mourning," to be intended, from the mourning connected with the judgment which follows.

† It is impossible to suppose that Bethshemesh had 50,000 inhabitants, still less "men"; and the Hebrew text shows signs of interpolation. Literally, it reads, "seventy men, fifty thousand men." Josephus, and a few of Kennicott's MSS., omit the larger number, with the approbation of Thenius, Keil, Erdmann, and others. Fausset would read, "seventy men, fifty out of a thousand men."

treatment of Jehovah's ark, and follow the example of the Philistines in sending it elsewhere. The men of Kirjath-jearim respond to their invitation, and there it abides for long in the house of Abinadab, kept by Eleazar his son. There David found it afterwards "in the fields of the wood (*jaar*)" (Ps. cxxxii. 6). Yet the long-suffering of the Lord endured. He had already provided, as we know, the instrument of deliverance.

6. (i.) Twenty years now elapse. A long discipline of sorrow is required before the humbled people turn with their heart to God. During all this time Samuel is patiently laboring for Him, urging upon them whole-hearted return, and the absolute putting away of all strange gods, the necessary hindrance to their deliverance. At last the Baals and Ashtoreths are put away, and throughout the land Jehovah alone is served. Then the deliverance, which would have been else but a letting loose for evil, is ready to be accomplished.

(ii.) Samuel now distinctly takes the place of mediator. He is, of course, ideally the prophet, not the priest; but in every type of Christ something of His

together unto Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and they [e] fasted on that day, and said there: We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. And the [f] Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, and the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And the children of Israel heard it, and were afraid before the Philistines. And the children of Israel said unto Samuel, Cease not to [g] cry for us unto Jehovah our God, that he may save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took one sucking [h] lamb, and offered it up as a whole burnt-offering to Jehovah; and Samuel cried unto Jehovah in behalf of Israel, and Jehovah answered him. And it was when Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, that the Philistines drew near to the battle against Is-

[e] Judg. 20. 26.
[f] Judg. 15. 9.
[g] Is. 37. 2–4.
[h] *cf.* Jno. 1. 29.

full place is seen. In connection with the prophet, who brings the message of God, the subjective side of salvation is emphasized — repentance and turning to God; but Samuel turns to God also for the people, and offers even the priestly sacrifice. There is not a hint of what some imagine—the intervention of a priest in this latter case; and in the case of Gideon and others, though not so formally, we have had already the performance of priestly acts. Samuel is the child of prayer, and he is ever also the man of prayer. The repentance of the people enables him confidently to take the place of intercession for them: "Gather all Israel to Mizpah," he says, (the outward manifestation of the heart-unity now existing among the people), "and I will pray Jehovah for you." He is, like Samson, the Nazarite, set apart from the womb to Jehovah, and in whom, as not in Samson, the spiritual side of this is shown. He is thus victorious in a strife in which Samson fails, and "not by might, nor by power," but through the Lord in whom he trusts. All Israel are gathered to Mizpah, and draw water and pour it out before Jehovah, acting out the piteous plea of the woman of Tekoah afterwards (2 Sam. xiv. 14): "We must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." But here they own that the dissolution of their lives in vanity and misery is the consequence of their sin: "We have sinned against Jehovah"; and now, according to the principle which has been before announced as to the Lord's deliverances, that when He delivered He raised up a judge, the judge appears again: "Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah."

This brings about the inevitable conflict. They had not gathered for battle; and were, in fact, in the extreme opposite condition to their former self-confidence in which they had provoked the Philistine attack. On the other hand, nothing more surely provokes the attack of the enemy than united Israel suppliant before the Lord. Accordingly, at once we hear of them in movement, while Israel, scarcely armed and helpless, can only urge on Samuel to cry ceaselessly to God for their deliverance. Happily they can say now, with truth of heart, "Jehovah our God": when did He fail to appear for those who could say so?

Samuel's reliance is not on spear or shield. He takes one sucking lamb, and offers it as a whole burnt-offering to Jehovah. This is his plea, and thus he cries to God for the people; and Jehovah answers. The offering does not, as most commentators say, represent the newly pledged obedience of the people,—poor ground of confidence as it would be in such a strait: but Christ, from his birth, the absolutely devoted One, the "*Lamb*," as in the perfect youth of glorious manhood. How blessed a Substitute for the tardy and spotted obedience of our best performances! While Samuel offers, the Philistines draw nigh. Who shall

rael. And Jehovah [i]thundered with a great voice on that day against the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and [j]pursued the Philistines, and smote them as far as below Bethcar. And Samuel took a [k]stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, and said, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. So the Philistines were humbled, and came no more into the border of Israel. And the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines [l]all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were [m]restored to Israel from Ekron even unto Gath; and the borders of them did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was [n]peace between Israel and the Amorite.

3. (15–17.) The prophet judge.

[3]And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

[i] 2 Sam. 22. 14, 15.

[j] 1 Sam. 14. 21, 22.

[k] *cf.* Josh. 24. 26–28.

[l] *cf.* Judg. 2. 7.

[m] Judg. 11. 33.

[n] *cf.* Judg. 3. 11, etc.

convert the crowd of feeble and affrighted people into warriors? All the more shall the Lord, therefore, Himself be seen: "Jehovah thundered with a great voice on that day against the Philistines": how would all His former witness in their land interpret to them this voice! "And they were smitten before Israel."

No great victory, after all, for Israel to boast of; except they will boast themselves in the Lord: a victory, therefore, safe and glorious,— the very best that could be. "And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them as far as below Beth-car,"— the "house of the [skipping] lamb": Israel, seen now as identified with the lamb sacrificed in their behalf, housed and happy.

So Ebenezer at last gains its name — the "stone of help." "The Philistines were humbled, and came no more into the border of Israel." The cities taken by them are restored; and Jehovah's hand is against them all the days of Samuel. With the rise of the king, matters assume, as we know, another aspect.

(iii.) Samuel is now the prophet-judge in Israel. The judge shadows the king, although not that; and thus we see in Samuel, as a type of Christ, the intimation of what in Him are united in full reality,— priest, prophet, king. It is only an intimation, not the reality, and thus points, as does the whole Old Testament, beyond itself. All types must, for this reason, be imperfect: the "shadow, and not the very image." (Heb. x. 1.) Yet the shadow has its proportional completeness: the high priest, as answering by Urim, became in so far the prophet and judge,— two things which naturally come together; the king, as we see him in David, is fully the prophet, while he orders the priestly service, and brings the ark to Zion. But here, for reasons we may see afterward, the type cannot be so complete.

There are four stations at which, in yearly circuit, Samuel judges the people. Let us notice, as illustrative of the exact method of Scripture, that three of the places are distinguished from the fourth, which is his own abode. They should thus stand the numerical test throughout; and being in circuit, show, perhaps, an orderly connection in their meanings also. Let us see if this hope be justified.

Naturally, as judicial stations, they will speak of different points of view, according to which judgment will be exercised; according to which Christ, as Son of man (for all judgment is committed to him as that) views the people He has redeemed. This will probably show us, also, why it is the *fourth* place at which he abides,— Ramah.

Bethel is the first station. It is a name which we are well acquainted with, as with what it stands for. Bethel is the "house of God" (El, the Mighty One),

> And he went from year to year in circuit to [o]Bethel and [p]Gilgal and [q]Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to [r]Ramah; for there was

[o] *cf.* Gen. 35. 7. [p] *cf.* Josh. 5. 2–9. [q] *cf.* ver. 5. [r] *cf.* ch. 1. 1.

and we see in Jacob the discipline connected with it, as well as the mighty work that is done by this—the transformation of Jacob into Israel. In the order of the Genesis-histories Jacob follows Isaac, in whom we have, as Paul in Galatians teaches us, the children of the free woman, born into the liberty of the sons of God. Bethel is thus a keynote word, which tells of the rule of God as Father over His house, with the blessed consequences of this.

But Christ is "Son over the house of God,"* and this character of judgment must belong to Him. We begin, therefore, first with that which is first of all our place. Children of God, and with the Spirit of adoption, we must *be* His children (Matt. v. 45), acting in character, and showing likeness to Him, as "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). The Father's judgment is to develop and maintain this in us; and this, therefore, is plainly the first judicial station of our Samuel.

The second is Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt was rolled off Israel; and this, as we have elsewhere seen (p. 43), was the reproach of slavery. In what we have just now considered, we have already had implied for us the liberty of sons (and this is the connection with the present); but it is circumcision that at Gilgal brings into practical liberty. Circumcision it is that *makes* Gilgal; and circumcision is the "putting off the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11, R. V.), "having no confidence in it." (Phil. iii. 3.) This goes with what is the positive side for the Christian, the worship of God in the Spirit, and glorying in Christ Jesus; and thus the free, holy, happy service of love is maintained.

The negative attainment without the positive is impossible; but it is the negative that is here insisted on: as the second place implies, the deliverance, the setting free. The judgment here is thus the complement of what Bethel has shown us.

The third station is one more difficult to realize in its exact meaning. Mizpah (or Mizpeh) means simply the "watchtower," and the general thought is susceptible of different applications. (See pp. 104, 134.) The third place, which naturally connects itself with the sanctuary and the presence of God, would suggest, however, that the *watching* is to be taken as in Hab. ii. 1, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me." The gatherings to Mizpah in the book of Judges (ch. xx.), and just now, according to the word of Samuel, have both, more or less, this character. It would appear, therefore, that what is implied in it is the watchfulness of one to whom the path of faith is a reality, and thus the positive guidance of God from day to day. So were Israel guided, as we know; and even more does the promise on His part speak the need of it, "I will guide thee with mine eye." (Ps. xxxii. 8.) For this there must be patient and steady watching; and the whole difference between a right path and a wrong is implied in it. Abstract right and wrong are by no means the whole question, and do not settle the matter for us. Beyond this lies all the will of God, personally, for each one of His own, with which is involved His whole right over them, but also the display of His wisdom and goodness abidingly in their behalf. Here, then, is a distinct ground of judgment from either of the former, a third station for our Prophet-Judge.

The fourth is Samuel's own city, Ramah, the "height." The name is, in its full length, Ramathaim-zophim, the "two heights of the watchers." Here we are in connection clearly with the last thought. The meaning and application we have already had. It suggests the place in Christ, linked with his appearance as Man in the presence of God for us, the dwelling-place of the Son of *man*, that it is His as Man being emphasized by the *fourth* place here. Yet we have

* Heb. iii. 6, where we must read, with the Revised Version, "over his house,"—God's,—not "his *own*," as in the common version.

his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an [s] altar to Jehovah. [s] *cf.* Gen. 12. 8.

## DIVISION 2. (Chap. viii.–xv.)

*Saul, the People's Saviour, but not the divine.*

The king demanded. 1. (*vv.* 1-9.) A unanimous choice.

(VIII.) 1. [1] AND it came to pass, when Samuel was [t] old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. And the name of his first-born was Joel, and the name of his second, Abiah: and they were judges in Beer- [t] 1 Ki. 1. 1. ch. 2. 22.

traveled, in fact, in circuit, as Samuel did: for this we cannot disconnect from His own saying, "My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God;" or from the end designed by God, "that He should be the first-born among many brethren." We are looking, therefore, toward Bethel again.

But here is the abiding ground of judgment, even as "walk ye in Him" is our peculiar responsibility as Christians. With this the circle of responsibility is complete. Here, too, is the altar to Jehovah, our place of acceptance and worship. The Lord make us realize in all this the fullness and depth of His precious word!

Div. 2.

We come now to the demand of the people for a king, and the history of Saul, the king given them according to their request. Though pointed out by God, in the recognized way of ascertaining His will, namely, by lot, yet he is exactly the king they have in mind, as even his height of stature shows. In this way alone could their desire be tested aright, to have a king, like all the nations. He is not after God's heart, but after the people's heart, and so He says: "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." (Hosea xiii. 11.) The lesson was not for that generation only, however; otherwise, it would be of little importance. In all this proving of Israel, as we have again and again been called to realize, it is man as man that is proved, and the depths of his heart unveiled. As to the people, their choice here is really such as they displayed at a later day, when they cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" "They have rejected Me," says Jehovah.

It was not that God had not designed them to have a king. The express provision in Deuteronomy is at least proof that one was permissible (ch. xvii. 14–20). The song of Hannah has already anticipated it. God's purpose in Christ could only be so fulfilled. Moreover, we have already seen that this was to be expressed in the history anticipatively. The king also, when in truth He shall come, will not only be in full accord with the divine throne over all, but will be the complete expression of it. The evil was in the evident unbelief on the part of the people; and, as naturally connecting itself with this, the total opposition to God in the king they wanted. Saul, the *Benjamite*, carries us back indeed to the book of Genesis, where we have seen in Benjamin the type (when separated from Joseph) of that Messiah to which Israel clings, a deliverer by power merely. As such they would have received Christ, yea, "taken him *by force* to make him a king," a manifest sign of the king of their choice. Barabbas, had he had the power, would really have suited them, as Barcochba afterwards* *did* suit them. God, and the whole relation of their souls to Him, they would gladly have left out.

This is the significance, then, of Saul, and it is wider than any merely Jewish one, while yet the Jew is necessarily in the fore-front.

* An infidel Rabbi of this day owns fully that Barcochba, the leader of the Jewish insurrection under Hadrian, "had all the qualifications of a Messiah." "He was, barring anointment, a Messiah who tallied, every inch of him, with the hopes which his nation harbored concerning such a man."—(Messianic Expectations, by Solomon Schindler.)

sheba. And his sons walked [u]not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. And all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and said unto him: Behold, thou art become old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now set us a [v]king to judge us, like all the nations. And the thing was [w]evil in Samuel's eyes when they said, Give us a king to judge us; and Samuel prayed unto Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, [x]Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have [y]rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to [z]all the deeds that they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. And now hearken unto their voice; only [a]testify solemnly unto them, and declare unto them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

2. (10–22.) Warning as to the king.

[2] And Samuel spake all Jehovah's words unto the

u *ctr.* Gen. 18. 19.

v Deut. 17. 14. Hos. 13. 10, 11.

w Deut. 28. 36.

x *cf.* Deut. 1. 22, 23.

y ver. 25. *cf.* Jno. 19. 14–16.

z *cf.* Ex. 32. 1–6.

a ch. 10. 25.

1. (i.) The occasion of the demand for a king is the misbehavior of Samuel's sons, whom in his old age he had made judges in Beersheba. Joel and Abiah, corrupted by opportunity, take bribes, and pervert justice; a thing which comes into view in the last days also, in connection with the coming of Christ as King, to exercise the judgment of God among the people (Ps. lxxxix). Their names stand for what they were responsible as judges to maintain,—Jehovah as the Mighty God (Joel), and the Father of the people (Abiah).* The people should have reasoned better: if so it were with Samuel's sons, what hope of man at all? and should have fled to God as the only righteous One. But they do not: instead of this the whole nation, as represented by their elders, come to Samuel, seeking a king to judge them, like the nations round. Their peculiar privilege of direct leaning upon God alone they are more than ready to give up for an arm of flesh; and though their plea is "to judge us," they must have been well aware how far judgment was exercised among the nations by their kings. In fact, as comes out afterwards, there was another cause in the threatening attitude of the Ammonites again, as in Jephthah's time (chap. xii. 12). In any case there was lack of faith in Him who had so constantly, whenever they had turned to Him, come in for them. As they looked back they could, indeed, see many reverses, and long captivities. The holiness of God had shown itself as Joshua had declared it would. Doubtless they would rather have something that they could cling to, other than this which involved the necessity of persistent obedience. This has been found again and again among the people of God. They could not stand before "this holy Lord God," and they unanimously preferred distance. The story is so old as to have become a trite and common thing; but it has not lost its significance, though it may its power to impress.

There are prayers that have to be granted, but in judgment: so with this prayer for a king. But care is taken that even self-deception shall be hardly possible. They are to have testimony from the Lord Himself of what all that is around them bore patent witness also—the manner of this king that they desired. Samuel is instructed to declare all this to them, that their decision may be in the plainest light that can be given.

(ii.) The testimony is, after all, simple enough. Man being what he is, honor

* Joel, "Jehovah [is] the Mighty God"; Abiah, "the Father [is] Jah."

people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your [b]sons, and appoint them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint him [c]captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and [men] to plough his ground, and reap his harvest, and make his instruments of war and the equipment of his chariots. And he will take your daughters for perfumers, and cooks, and bakers. And your [d]fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, the best of them, he will take and give unto his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his eunuchs and to his servants. And he will take your bondmen and your bondmaids, and your comeliest young men, and your asses, and use them for his work. He will take the tenth of your [e]sheep. And ye shall be his servants. And ye will [f]cry out in that day because of your king whom ye have chosen; and Jehovah will not answer you in that day.

And the people [g]refused to hearken to the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but there shall be a king over us, and we too will be [h]like all the nations, and our king shall judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and [i]spake them in Jehovah's ears. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

(IX.-X. 16.)

The king indicated. 1. (ix. 1-10.) The overruling of God.

2. [1]And there was a man of [j]Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. And he had a son whose name was Saul, in youthful prime, and [k]goodly: and there

b 1 ch. 14. 52.
c ch. 18. 5.
d 1 Ki. 21.7-16. ch. 22. 7. *ctr.* Eze.46. 18.
e *cf.* 1 Ki.4.7.
f *cf.* 1 Kings 12. 4. *ctr.* Ps.72.4.
g *cf.* Num. 14. 9.
h ver. 5. Lev. 18. 3. Deut. 4.7,8.
i ch. 12. 23.
j *cf.* Judg.20. 12. *ctr.* Gen.49. 10 with Micah 5. 2.
k *cf.* ch.16.7.

cannot be given him but he will debase himself with it. Put him in a place of service, he will serve himself first of all. Combine these two, as in the case of a king, self will shine out in him in the fullest way. This is nothing strange, alas, but the commonest experience. But here a people with Jehovah Himself the King, deliberately accepts the yoke of another!

2. (i.) The king in Israel, however, must be chosen of God, for he is to be the minister and viceroy of God. He must be pointed out to himself as the chosen of God, that he may realize aright his responsibility to Him, and be made to realize in quiet, before exaltation comes, the purpose of it. God will do everything possible to make untrue His own prophecy of the king that is to be: and to this end comes all this preparatory dealing with Saul.

Saul's genealogy is carefully given us for six generations back, himself being the seventh, *Shaul*, the "asked," complete in all that makes man naturally to be desired of man. This genealogy is surely in its meaning, therefore, moral, and scarcely favorable in its significance. Its interpretation is somewhat difficult, and yet may be suggested, and its numerical character, which by this time we may assure ourselves of, will help and test the attempt to understand it. Meant to be understood it necessarily is, appealing with all Scripture to

> was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people. And the she-asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost; and Kish said to Saul his son, Take, I pray thee, one of the young men with thee, and arise,

man as the rational creature of God, who needs yet continually to be taught of God.

The numbers read naturally backward, according to the actual descent, Kish being the sixth and not the first in the line given here. To understand it, therefore, it would seem that we should trace it in the same order.

We begin, then, with one who is simply given as "a man of Benjamin," leaving more than the "higher critics" to wonder if the name has not dropped out. For the moral purpose, the omission of a name may itself have meaning. We have been taught of the Spirit Himself so to think of the omissions in the account of Melchizedek, and have seen it to be so with the nameless servant of Abraham (Gen. xxiv.) and the nameless city in Reuben (Josh. xiii. 16); and so it may well be here. The significance of Saul's descent from Benjamin we have briefly glanced at; and at the outset Kish is set before us here as a "man of Benjamin": the repetition here we may conceive, therefore, to have another meaning; and from what has been said, not in any sense an evil one. We may well be carried back to him who was before any failure, to show us the better the failure itself, and how it came about. A "man of Benjamin," as that, conveys no suggestion of evil, and there being no name beside, forbids the thought of any departure from the character implied in the tribal name. How good a sign of integrity for a child of Benjamin to be known only as that, with no intrusion of self to destroy simplicity! Here, then, we have got back beyond any evil development, if afterwards we should find this; while even here, however, we may have what enters into the making of Saul the "asked": for those who can build the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers slew, can take pleasure in saintly lineage while far from saintliness.

The second name in descent is that of Aphiah; and if we have been right thus far in interpretation, then we may find the initial point of departure in this second name, the contrast with the first. For Aphiah means most legitimately (as the causative of *puah*), "I will utter," or "speak out"; and if we think of that name unuttered which heads the genealogy, it is natural to put these things together. We have now in opposition to the lowliness forgetful of self, the self-importance which needs must find utterance. And is not this always the point of departure from God, the true fall of the creature,— which is, indeed, to take up the taunt of the enemy, ever a "fall *upward*,"— the creature lifting itself out of its place, in obedience to the suggestion, "ye shall be as God"? The step here, in such a history as this, vindicates itself, therefore, as at least the image of truth.

The third name, under the number of manifestation, reveals the true character of all self-assumption in a child of God. It is Bechorath, "primogeniture," the claim of nature, not of grace, of *first* against *new* birth. The order is "first, that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." (1 Cor. xv. 46). In the book of Genesis we are familiar with the fact that the first-born constantly thus *loses* the birthright,— Ishmael to Isaac, Esau to Jacob, Reuben to Joseph, Manasseh to Ephraim. If the child of God betray self-confidence, it is always and of necessity "confidence in the *flesh*." The principle of the new nature is faith, and faith's object never can be self. Even faith can, alas, be gloried in; but it cannot "glory," save in Christ.

Zeror, under the fourth number, which is that of the creature, means "tightly inclosed," or "pressed together." It is thus used for a "stone," because of the compression of its particles. It speaks here, therefore, as it would seem, of the narrow sphere and restricted limits of the old creation, shut in between birth

go seek the asses. And he passed through [l]Mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, and they found them not; and they passed through the land of Shaalim, and there they were not; and they passed through the land of Jemini, and found them not. When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his

[l] ch. 1. 1. ch. 14. 22.

and death, confined to the things seen and temporal. Yet men hug these chains, alas, and deliberately shut out heaven and eternity, and count themselves wise in doing so. Here is the sphere of their "primogeniture," however, and they cannot, if they would, transcend it.

But in this sphere still how much space is there for self to display itself in. As an acre of ground may be an ant's world, so the contraction of man's desires gives him scope enough for the petty being into which he has shriveled up. If, moreover, the surface of the ground is actually narrow, he can do as in our modern cities,—build into the air. Great he must be, though it were only in imagination; and here, under the fifth number, that of capacity, we have Abiel,—not, as the name might signify, "God [is] my Father," but rather "Father of might": one whose strength is in himself. Such are the contradictions, such the possibilities and actuality of this strange being, man! With all its contradictions, this is still the character of the Sauls of whatever day. Kish ends the list with the assurance implied in his name, "ensnaring," of the magic for deception that abides in all this for those for whom the light of the divine presence has not dispelled the illusion, and brought face to face with the holiness of truth. This Saul, this man of the people, has, beside all this, many rightly attractive qualities. We shall find him shortly tested under the hand of God,—surely not unmercifully, that were absolute impossibility from Him; yet so that he collapses utterly, and shows himself the poor lost creature that he is,—even so, not turning to Him, nor seeking the honor that is of God only. As he is the man of the people, so before the people he lives the sham life that men count really life; when the bubble breaks all is gone, out of the wreck nothing saved, the freightage of a soul precious to God, and worth Christ's sacrifice to save it, gone irretrievably, and forever. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The overruling of God is clearly seen in the way Saul is led up to meet Samuel, ignorant of the hand that is guiding him,—ignorant of the very person of Samuel, as it would seem, and all his memorable history. Suited king for such a people, who were deliberately ignoring God's mercies to them in the past, of which the prophet had been the divine instrument. Saul is seeking his father's she-asses which have gone astray, and finds an intractable and rebellious nation, worse by far than these, put into his hand without seeking, to be brought back to God. In both cases he is unsuccessful: yet, had he sought the last with the same energy with which he had sought the first, he might have had the success which was now reserved for one to come after him.

A suggestion may be made as to the places of Saul's vain search. There are four places in which he *searches*, but these are divided into three stages only, Mount Ephraim and the land of Shalisha being put together. In the land of Zuph, which comes significantly, therefore, as a fourth stage (the number of testing and failure), he does *not* search, but abandons his quest; and the name Zuph means "honeycomb," the type of the sweetness of natural things, which have overcome many more than Saul. Thus there is a gleam of light which should encourage us to look further. The first stage gives us, under the number of obedience, Mount Ephraim, the "fruitfulness" which God seeks in us, with the "land of Shalisha," ("third part," or "divided into three,") which I cannot interpret. Here "they found them not." The second stage may speak of "humiliation," where confessed failure in obedience would naturally bring the soul; and the name agrees with this, Shaalim, probably "hollows" or "deep valleys": but "there they were not." The third stage is the "land of Jemini,"

servant that was with him, Come and let us return; lest my father give up about the asses, and be anxious about us. And he said unto him, Behold now, a [m]man of God is in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he saith cometh surely to pass. Let us now go thither: perhaps he will tell us our way in which we should go. And Saul said unto his servant, But behold, if we go, [n]what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way. (In former time in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spake in this way: Come, let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a [o]prophet was in former time called a seer.) And Saul said unto his servant, Well said; come, let us go. And they went unto the city where the man of God was.

*m* 1 Ki. 22.7.

*n cf.* 1 Ki. 14. 3. 2 Ki. 5. 15, 16.

*o* 1 Chron. 9. 22. Is. 30. 10.

2. (11-24.) A lesson of communion.

[2]As they were going up the ascent to the city, they found young maidens going forth to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before thee: make haste now, for he came into the city to-day; for the people have a [p]sacrifice in the high place to-day. As

*p cf.* Lev. 17. 8, 9.

("my right hand,") the place of dependent exaltation to which the "valley of humiliation" so often leads, through grace: but there, too, "they found them not." Israel was, indeed, astray; nor could *he* find them whom the sweetness of nature beguiled from the search.

But at this point the servant's voice is heard, counseling, as the true servant will, to "ask of God." Saul does not think of this, nor know the man who can declare His mind. All this is characteristic; as it is that with the servant should be found the fitting present for the man of God: little enough, only the fourth part of a shekel, but still the "silver" of atonement,—current coin in the kingdom of God. So they are provided.

A parenthesis is introduced here to let us know the identity between the "prophet" and the "seer." The latter term simply implied the knowledge which the prophet had, not the source of it. The *nahbi*, the prophet, was the mouthpiece of God, whose word filled him and "bubbled forth" from him. The people of the time here indicated spoke but of the "seer." It was a day of decline, when carnal men thought at least much more of the effect than of the cause, and sought the one while they ignored the other. God had spoken long since of the "prophet"; the people cared but for the "seer." Saul, upon this low ground, approves what he could not initiate. He, too, seeks the "seer"; while the prophet, taught of God, is seeking for Him this blind man, brought by a way he knows not.

(ii.) To meet the seer they have to go up to a higher level, and Saul finds himself an inquirer in a strange place. First of all, there meet them on the ascent young maidens going forth to draw water, and from them they obtain their first answer. By the wells all through we have communications of grace, simple enough when we know for what the well stands. Those who draw water are, of course, those who seek and use the living waters of the Spirit; and with these is the knowledge of the things of God. From these Saul learns not only of the seer, but of the sacrifice, and a feast upon the sacrifice, the great lesson of

soon as ye be come into the city ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the [q]high place to eat; for the people will not eat until he come, for he blesseth the sacrifice; afterward they eat that are invited. And now go up, for ye shall find him this day. And they went up into the city. As they were going into the midst of the city, behold, Samuel was coming towards them, going up to the high place.

[q] 1 Ki. 3. 2.

Now Jehovah had [r]informed Samuel, a day before Saul came, saying, About this time to-morrow I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel, and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have [s]looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah answered him, Behold the man of whom I spake unto thee: this man shall have authority over my people. And Saul drew near to Samuel in the midst of the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me to the high place, and ye shall eat with me to-day; and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for the asses that were lost to thee three days ago, set not thy heart on them, for they are found; and on whom is all the [t]'desire of Israel? is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said,

[r] *cf.* ch. 3. 7. Amos 3. 7.

[s] Ex. 3. 7.

[t] ch. 8. 5, etc. *ctr.* ch. 13. 14.

communion for a king to learn. We have long since looked at the peace-offering (Lev. iii. and vii. 11, seq.) where God and men sit, so to speak, at a common table, brought together by the work of the cross, and with common delight in Him who has made peace by it. But this is the foundation of the reign of peace, the reign of God in righteousness and peace among men. When it really comes, the Lamb, the Victim, will be on the Throne; and upon this foundation only can there be the least anticipation of this blessed time. Of all this, therefore, Saul must learn, to be fitted for his kingdom. He must himself participate in this peace. The link that unites God and man is the only link that unites man and man.

God is speaking in His love, seeking to win for himself this goodly creature of His hand. He reveals to Samuel, the day before Saul comes, that He is sending him, and that He means through him to minister to His people's need. The prince shall be the saviour. And that he may be fully such, God would bring him to have first to do with Himself, before he comes to stand in the presence of the people. Thus by degrees He breaks to him His purpose: a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and made so by dreadful penalty exacted for a dreadful crime, He will take him with all the littleness which should keep him lowly, and mindful—as what Benjamite could be unmindful?—of the discipline through which they had all passed, and set him at the head of all the people. Samuel salutes him thus with the surprising news that upon him is fixed the desire of Israel. This can only mean that what they sought in a king he was the very man to answer to. He was in this way really the man of the people's choice, the very style and pattern of the king they craved. But being such, God would, if he met this desire, make him much more,—desired to have him for Himself and with Himself, and for this was meeting him after the manner here.

Am not I a Benjamite, of the [u]smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? why then dost thou speak such words to me? And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the chamber, and gave them place at the [v]head of them that were invited; and they were about thirty men. And Samuel said to the cook, Bring the portion that I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee; and the cook took up the [w]shoulder and what was on it, and set it before Saul. And he said, Behold what was reserved to set before thee! eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee, since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

[u] Judg. 6. 15. ch. 15. 17. ch. 18. 18.

[v] *cf.* Lk. 14. 7–11.

[w] Lev. 7. 32–34.

3. (25–x. 16.) Saul anointed, and the signs that follow.

[3]And they came down from the high place into the city, and he spake with Saul upon the roof. And they [x]rose early, and when it was about day-dawn, Samuel called to Saul upon the roof, saying, Arise, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, into the street. As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Tell the servant to pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still now, that I may

[x] Josh. 8. 10. ch. 17. 20.

Now he is called to feast upon the sacrifice. To feast upon love's provision for one's need, freely partaking of what has cost so much to give, is the way of acquirement of the spirit of sacrifice — of service which is that. So the special part which has been reserved for him is the burden-bearing shoulder, the priest's portion (Ex. xxix. 27): for the priest's heart must go with the kingly office; in Him whose representative Saul is to be, king and priest are united together.

(iii.) Saul abides with Samuel for the night, and early in the morning is sent away. Samuel anoints him,—at once the assurance of power which he shall have, and the character of it, and the dependence upon the Spirit which it implies. Then the first kiss of subjection is on the part of the man of God, just now the judge of Israel. He gives him also three "signs," which, when they come to pass, he is to do as his hand finds, in the full conviction that God is with him. These signs are, of course, to be more than mere foreseen occurrences. They are to have in themselves a voice, which will, however, depend upon himself for its significance: he must have in himself the understanding heart, or he will miss the meaning. "How often there is a meaning, a language, perfectly intelligible to one who has ears to hear, but which escapes us because our gross and hardened heart has no spiritual intelligence or discernment! And yet all our future hangs upon it. God has shown our incapacity for the blessing it involved. Nevertheless the means were not wanting." ("*Synopsis.*") From this necessity on our part, moreover, divine grace itself cannot release us. It would not be grace to do so. Yet how much of our lives are barren of meaning because we have not had capacity to read this language, or quickness to discern the voice that was speaking to us! Nor is this only true of the facts of the world around us, or of the events of our own lives: Scripture itself, with all its wealth of blessedness, is given "that the *man of God* may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Even its plainest parts need spiritual discernment; and how much of it is written in a way that is *not* plain, but which needs and calls for spiritual intelligence and diligent inquiry, in order to any proper apprehension.

Saul then is left to his ability to read these signs; not as if the Lord were not ready to endue him with all the ability needed; of that we require no assurance:

cause thee to hear the [y]word of God. And Samuel took a vial of oil, and [z]poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance? When thou goest from me to-day, thou shalt find two men by [a]Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say unto thee, The asses that thou wentest to seek are found; and lo, thy father hath dismissed the matter of the asses, and is anxious as to you, saying, What shall I do as to my son? And thou shalt go on forward from thence, and shalt come to the oak of Tabor, and there three men shall meet thee going up to God, to [b]Bethel, one carrying three [c]kids, and another carrying three loaves of [d]bread, and another carrying a bottle of [e]wine. And they will ask of thy welfare, and give thee two loaves of bread, which thou shalt receive at their hands. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where are the posts of the Philistines. And it shall be, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou wilt meet a company of [f]prophets coming down

[y] ch. 15. 16.
[z] ctr. ch. 16. 3.
[a] Gen. 35. 19, 20.
[b] Gen. 28. 18, 19.
[c] cf. Lev. 5. 6. with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
[d] cf. Lev. 2. 4. with Jno. 6. 33.
[e] cf. Num. 28. 14 with Luke 22. 20.
[f] cf. ch. 19. 18–24.

but here is the mystery of that dependent, yet free and accountable being of which we are possessed. We share with Saul this nature, with all its privilege, and with all its responsibility; and the Lord's ways are equal, let us remember, with us all.

The first sign, in accordance with its numerical meaning, carries him back to Benjamin's *origin*. He was the son of his mother's sorrow,—she had died to give him birth; and where her grave stood there his inheritance began,*—at Zelzah more strictly, which interprets the thought as "shadowed brightness." The world is shadowed when heaven stands revealed; and so in the Cross, the deepest shadow ever cast upon it. He also that will save his life shall lose it; but he that loses it in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. The self-renunciation Saul so needed is here enforced for him; and here two men meet him to let him know that, apart from his labor, the asses that he sought are found, and his father's heart is yearning for his son. God can as easily work without us as He can with us; need of us He has not, but that heart of love to which our human affections, given of Him, truly, if feebly, testify. Many lessons, from different sides, concur here, evidently for one purpose—that Saul may be in the hand of God the free but devoted instrument He seeks.

The second sign yields its lesson in due order, that to the one so yielded up to God fellowship and help shall come from those who seek God. Here *three* men appeared instead of two, for they represent the whole Godhead, though seen in His people, acting in the strengthening of His servant; and they go up to God to Bethel, where Jacob learnt that God was—not simply *his* God, but the God of His own house, governing it for Himself. It is with those who seek God *there* that there will be found the apprehension of His mind; and with these, at the oak of Tabor, the living strength that unites with "purpose," the man of God will have recognition. These may be few indeed; they ordinarily *are* few: but they represent, as we have seen, the fellowship of God Himself. Their gifts—what they have for God—are to be noted: three goats, one for each man, for the sin-offering; the bread, which they can share with another; the drink-offering wine, which is to be poured out to God. Such a company speaks plainly of its faith, and may be recognized by those who have hearts for it.

The third sign shows the work of the Spirit of God, even in a scene in which

* This was not, of course, geographically exact, but near enough for the meaning which seems given to it here.

from the high place, and before them a lyre and timbrel and pipe and harp, and they prophesying. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall [g]come suddenly upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and thou shalt be changed into another man. And when these signs shall come to pass to thee, do thou [h]as thy hand shall find: for God is with thee. And thou shalt go down before me to [i]Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to thee, to offer up [j]burnt-offerings, to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry until I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.

And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him [k]another heart; and all those signs [l]came to pass that day. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it was so, when all that knew him before saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that hath happened to the son of Kish? [m]is Saul also among the prophets? And a man of that place answered and said, And who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? And when he had ended prophesying he came to the high place. And Saul's uncle said unto

g ch. 11. 6.

h ch. 11. 7, etc. ch.14.1,etc.
i Judg. 3.19. ch. 11. 14.
j ch. 13.8-14.

k *cf.* ch. 16. 14. *ctr.* Jno. 3. 3-7.
l ch. 3. 19.

m ch. 18. 10. ch. 19. 24.

the Philistine has his posts at the very hill of God itself.* The presence of the enemy at such a place is the sad evidence of the state of things in Israel; but the remedy therefor is not, in the first place, by power, but by return to God and subjection to Him. He must be exalted where He has been dishonored; and this is what the spirit of prophecy does. Saul meets here, therefore, a company of prophets, and their various instruments of music show the joy and boldness that accompany the return of heart to God. How small a thing is the enemy in the presence of God! And this joy in Him is the sure sign of the overthrow of all that opposes itself to Him. Jehoshaphat's singers and trumpeters are in the forefront of the host, and it is to these that the Lord hearkens and gives victory. (2 Chron. xx. 22.) What a lesson for the Benjamite warrior, Saul!

At this point the Spirit of Jehovah would come upon him, and he would be changed into another man, gifted with needed ability for the occasion, according to the place in which God had put him for the blessing of the people. Then he was to act as his hand found opportunity, for God was with him.

But there follows a needed limiting of power, which might easily, in a time of such disorder, be carried too far. And here Samuel's words look on to a time of special testing for Saul after he shall have been confirmed in the kingdom. In fact, he failed then, and his failure forfeited for him the continuance of the royal power in his house. He was to go down before Samuel to Gilgal, and there wait for him to offer the offerings needed. Seven days he would have to wait, and God would guide him through the prophet as to what to do. From this it is manifest that Samuel remained the representative of the kingdom over all, even when Saul took the lower kingdom: and this was the more necessary to be insisted on in view of the spirit of prophecy coming upon Saul also. But the men themselves were total contrasts; and here the two kingdoms show their possible opposition to each other,—a possibility to become actuality at an after time.

* Why called so, we are not told, apparently; nor is it needed for the purpose of the lesson.

him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses; and when we saw that they were nowhere we went to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us for certain that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he [n]told him not. [n] cf. Luke 2. 19, 51.

(X. 17-XI.)

The king openly manifested. 1. (17-27.) The lot.

3. [1]And Samuel called the people together to Jehovah to [o]Mizpah. And he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, *I* [p]brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you; but *ye* have this day [q]rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities, and have said unto him, [Nay,] but a king shalt thou set over us. Now therefore, present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes and by your thousands. And Samuel caused all the [r]tribes of Israel to come near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. And he caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, and the family of Matri was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken. And they sought him, but he was not to be found. And they inquired of Jehovah further, Has the man yet come hither? And Jehovah said, Behold, he is [s]hidden among the baggage. And

[o] ch. 7. 5.
[p] Josh. 24. 6, etc.
[q] ch. 8. 7.
[r] ch. 14. 41.
[s] ch. 9. 21.

All these signs followed, as Samuel had foretold, and the same day. But "Saul among the prophets" became an ominous proverb in Israel, in spite of the prudent question of the bystander, who infers that God is the Source of the prophecy, thus the Father of the prophets. To his uncle's questioning he replies, without divulging the secret of the kingdom.

3. The third subdivision gives the open manifestation of the king: first, by the lot, the way in which the divine choice was ascertained; then in the deliverance actually effected by him,—the work, in part, which he was needed and raised up to do. This confirms him in the place which God had given him.

(i.) We have seen the lot used in the apportionment of their inheritance to the tribes of Israel, and to discover the guilty one in the case of the appropriation of that which was devoted to the Lord at Jericho. The account here is very brief: first, we hear of Benjamin being taken, then of the family of Matri (only mentioned here), and then of Saul, the son of Kish. Matri means, probably, "Jehovah is watching." The place of gathering being Mizpeh, the "watchtower," the significance of which we have seen as implying the people watching what Jehovah will say, here we may be reminded of the converse truth. Jehovah, in fact, was not speaking out His mind. He had done so, and they had given no heed. Now, even while He indicated Saul, it was as *their* choice, rather than *His*. He is forced to silence, and to await the result of their self-will. So Samuel once more warns them that in seeking a king they were rejecting the Lord. The lot has lost, therefore, its true meaning: it is not properly Jehovah's choice; and little can be said about it.

When Saul is announced, he is not to be found, until the Lord answers their inquiry by letting them know that he is hidden among the baggage. In truth he was,—a mere "vessel" among the dead, inanimate "vessels," (as the word means), which He can use, who can make all things serve Him, but without the

they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people, he was [t]taller than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said unto all the people, See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people [u]shouted, and said, Live the king! And Samuel told the people the [v]manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went home to [w]Gibeah; and there went with him a band whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, [x]How shall this man save us? and they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he was as a deaf man.

[t] ch. 16. 7.
[u] ch. 4. 5.
[v] *cf.* ch. 8. 10–17.
[w] Ju. 19. 12. ch. 13. 2.
[x] ch. 11. 12.

2. (xi. 1–11.) Saul the deliverer from Ammon.

[2]And [y]Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against [z]Jabesh-Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us and we will [a]serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, On this [condition] will I make a covenant with you, that I put out all your right eyes, and lay it as a reproach upon [b]all Israel. And the elders

[y] Judg. 11. 4, 12. 2 Sam. 10. 2.
[z] ch. 31. 11. Judg. 21. 8.
[a] *cf.* Judg. 15. 11.
[b] *cf.* Josh. 7. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 21.

life and spirit of service. However, when he is brought out, for thews and sinews he is a man indeed, and towers over the heads of all the people. Samuel points out how well he answers the ideal that they seek, and the people shout in answer, "Live the King!" But it means as little as the king himself does. Just so far as Saul has risen above them they have shrunk. Their colossus is but a shadow over them. Could he be aught else, when they had put him between their souls and God!

But all is settled, and they must abide their choice. And indeed the godly can own God in it, and thus escape the shadow. Samuel tells them the manner of the kingdom, and writes it in a book, and it is laid up before the Lord. Then he sends them to their houses; and Saul returns to Gibeah, to his house. There is no exuberance of loyalty. What men set their hearts on, they often need only to have to find how little it is. *God* touches the hearts of some, that they follow Saul; else none would have done so! And the children of Belial ask now, what the men of piety would have asked before, "How shall this man save us?" *Before*, that question would have honored God; *now* it leaves Him out. With all "powers that be," faith recognizes, even in Saul, "a minister of God for good," and knows the omnipotent love that makes all things work for good. How could it "despise," as the men of Belial do, the "minister of God"?

Saul's new-found greatness sits well upon him too, just now. He is as a deaf man to all their murmurings.

(ii.) The deliverance from the Ammonites it is that shows Saul to be the deliverer for whom the people are waiting, and which confirms the kingdom in his hand. With the Ammonites we have been already made familiar, especially in connection with a former deliverance by Jephthah, and their significance cannot now be doubtful. We find them here once again attacking Israel, under their king Nahash, whose name, almost identical with that of Nahshon, prince of Judah in the wilderness, means "divination, augury." Nahshon, however, as we have seen in the book of the wilderness, is to be understood in a good sense, as Nahash the Ammonite cannot be. The divination of the heathen was assertedly the interpretation of a divine answer, though given through material signs, and the character of this is indicated in the identity of this word with that which was the general term for "serpent." The spirit of all doctrinal

of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days respite, that we may send [c]messengers into all the territory of Israel; and, if there be none to save us, we will come out unto thee. And the messengers came unto Gibeah of Saul, and spake the words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice, and [d]wept. And lo, Saul came after the oxen, from the field; and Saul said, What [aileth] the people that they weep? and they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. And the [e]Spirit of God came suddenly upon Saul when he heard these things; and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and [f]hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel, by the hands of messengers, saying, Whoso cometh not out after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the [g]fear of Jehovah fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. And he numbered them in Bezek, and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of [h]Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto the messengers that had come, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-Gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came, and told it to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. And the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow will we come out

c *cf.* Josh. 10. 6.

d Judg. 21. 3. ch. 30. 4.

e ch. 10. 10. Judg. 14. 6.

f Judg. 19. 29, 30.

g *cf.* Josh. 3. 7. 1 Chr. 29. 25.

h *ctr.* Judg. 1. 2.

heresy (of which the Ammonite speaks) is indeed Satanic. As the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of truth, and by the truth it is that men are sanctified, so on the other hand, Satan is the father of lies, and destroys men with the poison of falsehood. Scripture, in entire opposition to the natural thought, emphasizes more strongly by far the condemnation of doctrinal than of moral evil, closely connected as these are; and it is not hard to understand why, if by the word of truth we are new begotten and sanctified. The lusts of the flesh bring with them—at least wherever the light shines—their own condemnation; but Satan's lie is the darkness which covers and shelters all the rest; or the false light that lures to shipwreck.

The attack of Nahash is naturally not upon the strongest part of Israel, but the weakest. Jabesh-gilead contributed no warriors to the Benjamite war, and was visited with ruthless destruction at the hands of united Israel at that time. Since then, it had recovered itself, but has here little strength of faith to oppose the enemy. Gilead, "the heap of witness," speaks of memory that should be fruitful; and in fact the country is so, even at the present day; but Jabesh, "dry," often "dried up, withered," speaks of the reverse of this, and it is there where the truth is not productive,—where decline has begun in the soul,—that the attacks of error are most easily effectual.

Jabesh will surrender, if that be all that is needed, and serve the king of Ammon; but the king will not agree, except they come to his terms, worthy as they are of an Ammonite. He must thrust out all their *right eyes*, and lay it as a reproach against Israel. Spiritually read, a reproach indeed, if we interpret, according to what we have had elsewhere (vol. i. p. 389, *n.*), the *right* eye as the eye of faith. Reason and faith are in fact the double witness in man which, where the soul is right with God, like the vision of the two eyes, accord in one image. But the following of man, which all heresy in its essence is, puts out therefore necessarily the eye of faith: for this sees God and not man. Nahash in his requirement speaks, therefore, quite intelligibly here.

unto you, and ye shall do unto us all that seemeth good in your eyes.

And it was so on the morrow, that Saul arrayed the people in [i]three companies, and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and [j]slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day; and it was so that they that remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

3. (xi.12–15.) The kingdom renewed.

[3]And the people said unto Samuel, [k]Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, and we will put them to death. And Saul said, [l]No man shall be put to death this day; for to-day hath Jehovah wrought deliverance in Israel. And Samuel said unto the people, Come, and let us go to [m]Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal, and there in Gilgal before Jehovah they made Saul king. And there they [n]sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings

*i cf.* Judg.7. 16, etc.
*j* Judg.11.32, 33.
*k* ch. 10. 27.
*l* ch. 14. 45. 2 Sam. 19. 22.
*m* ch. 10. 8. ch. 13. 4.
*n cf.* 2 Sam. 6. 17, 18.

But even the men of Jabesh demand a seven days' respite, to see if there be no deliverer in Israel yet; and this the arrogance of Nahash grants; for he has not a dream of any rescue. The messengers of the straitened city come, therefore, at once to Gibeah, Saul's city, with the news of these conditions.

As he hears, the Spirit of God comes upon Saul, and he summons the people with a threat to follow himself and Samuel. We see clearly that there is no energy in the people, and the energy in Saul is not of the highest kind. He leans on Samuel, and puts his name forth, though after his own, to enforce obedience, appealing to their fear as the most successful argument, and indeed not without cause; and in fact the fear of Jehovah it is that falls upon the people, so that they come out in mass. They gather (significantly) in Bezek, the place of the "fetter,"—under constraint, not willingly; and Saul sends word to the men of Jabesh that they shall have help.

(iii.) In result, the Ammonites are thoroughly beaten and scattered; and Saul becomes in this respect the people's saviour, who therefore go off into a vehement enthusiasm for the man they had despised. But the Ammonites are but an incident in the history here. They do not give character to the condition of things in Israel, and do not test the king of their choice. We shall see in a little while what does so, and then how entirely Saul fails. Speaking according to the spiritual meaning, the deliverance of the people of God from heresy, however necessary, does not put them right with God; for this, much more is needed than orthodoxy, even of the strictest kind.

Yet this is a deliverance, and the people rightly may rejoice. Saul, too, uses his triumph wisely and with moderation. Samuel uses it to draw the people to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there. Gilgal is where the "reproach of Egypt" of the bondage of the people there, was rolled away. Circumcision, the renunciation of all confidence in the flesh, there enabled them to be the "Lord's host," the free servants of His will in opposition to all the hosts of evil. Thus the Captain of the Lord's host,—greater even than Joshua, how much greater than Saul!—could take His place at their head for the career of victory now opening before them. The application is easy enough here. What should hinder things coming into their place as then? Let there be only subjection, all would be as then. Let Saul be as Joshua, the lower kingdom be in truthful obedience to the higher, God still remained for them Jehovah, the Unchanged, Unchangeable. Such, surely, was the thought in Samuel's heart, for people and king. Thus only could their "sacrifices of peace-offerings" have meaning. But alas! there were too plain indications of another spirit than this; and if "Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly," nothing is said of him whose joy would have

before Jehovah, and there Saul and all the men of Israel [o] rejoiced greatly.

(XII.-XIII. 16.)

Saul's probation. 1. (xii. 1-5.) Samuel's integrity.

4. [1]And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and gray-headed; and my sons, behold, they are with you; and I have walked before you from my [p] childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: [q] witness against me before Jehovah, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I injured? or from whose hand have I taken ransom, to [r] blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor hast thou injured us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, Jehovah is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said, [They are] witness.

2. (xii. 6-15.) His warning: their repetition of their fathers' sins.

[2]And Samuel said unto the people, [It is] Jehovah who appointed Moses and Aaron, and who [s] brought up

o *ctr.* 2 Sam. 1. 17 with ch. 13. 14.

p ch. 2. 18, 26.

q Acts 20. 33. Lev. 19. 13. Nu. 16. 15.

r Ex. 23. 8. ch. 8. 3.

s Ex. 6. 27, 28. Mi. 6. 4. *cf.* Ps. 99. 6.

been deepest had the material of it been there. If Samuel rejoiced, it must have been indeed with trembling. And so his words now show.

4. A new section opens here. For now the new king must abide the rule of the higher kingdom, and be tested as to his fitness to fulfill its requirements. So it has ever been. So, in regard to God's governmental dealings with man in this life, it ever must be. Even the Church, though the witness of divine grace in its fullest character, yet as the responsible vessel of this on earth, has not escaped, nor could escape, this testing. "Unto thee goodness, *if thou continue* in His goodness," says the apostle of the Gentiles, the special "minister" of the Church (Col. i. 25), "otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom., xi. 22.) How she has answered to this test, let her history, in the light of the word of God, decide. Saul did not stand, and we are called now, for our own profit, to consider the cause and manner of his fall. These things are written for our admonition: may we have open ears to receive the admonition!

(i.) Samuel now stands forth before the people, rejoicing because of their deliverance, to use the opportunity to effect one much greater, namely, from the sin which is always the degradation and destruction of a people. Their own had never yet been realized, in asking for a king; and now their rejoicing in the king they had got was likely to blind their eyes yet more, and God's mercy toward them become only an occasion of worse departure from Him. Samuel for this, therefore, first of all, makes them own the uprightness of his own conduct in the place which God had given him among them. They were thus without excuse as to that which they had demanded, for although they had pleaded that the prophet's sons walked not in his ways, such failure allowed of easy correction. Indeed, as he shows presently, without condescending to any direct notice of it, it was not the true ground for what they had sought at all, but their fear of the Ammonites, and their inability to trust Jehovah for protection. This cowardly unbelief would naturally be cowardly enough in self excuses, and he does not honor them by even noticing them.

(ii.) His integrity being allowed on all hands, he bids them stand forth while he reasons with them for his God. Jehovah's deeds were known well enough. He does not need to speak of them in order or at length. That they had been

your fathers out of the land of Egypt. Now, then, stand that I may reason with you before Jehovah of all the righteous acts of Jehovah, that he did unto you and to your fathers. When Jacob had come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto Jehovah, then Jehovah [t]sent Moses and Aaron, and they brought your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. And they [u]forgat Jehovah their God, and he sold them into the hand of [v]Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the [w]Philistines, and into the hand of the king of [x]Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto [y]Jehovah and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken Jehovah, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths; but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. And Jehovah sent [z]Jerubbaal, and Bedan,* and [a]Jephthah, and [b]Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies round about; and ye dwelt securely. And ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, and ye said unto me, Nay, but a [c]king shall rule over us! when [d]Jehovah your God was your king. And now behold the king whom ye have chosen, whom ye have demanded; and behold, Jehovah hath set a king over you. If ye will [e]fear Jehovah, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the voice of Jehovah, and [f]both ye and the king that reigneth over you be followers of Jehovah your God, [well]. But if ye will not obey the voice of Jehovah, but rebel against the voice of Jehovah, then shall the hand of Jehovah be [g]against you, even [as] against your fathers.

8. (xii. 16–25.) The seal of heaven.

[8]Now, therefore, stand and see this great thing that Jehovah doeth before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto Jehovah, and he will send [h]thunder and rain, that ye may understand and see that your wickedness is great in the eyes of Jehovah, which ye have done in asking for a king. And Samuel called unto Jehovah, and Jehovah sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared

t Ex. 4. 12–17.
u Judg. 3. 7. *cf.* Ps. 106. 13.
v Judg. 4. 2, etc.
w Judg. 13. 1.
x Judg. 3. 12.
y Judg. 3. 9.
z Judg. 6. 11, etc.
a Judg. 11. 1, etc.
b ch. 7. 3, etc.
c ch. 8. 5.
d De. 33. 2–8. Judg. 8. 23. ch. 8. 7.
e Josh. 24. 14.
f ver. 25. ch. 13. 13.
g Ps. 34. 16.
h 2 Sam. 22. 14.

* Probably a textual error for Barak, which is the reading of the Septuagint.

brought out of Egypt, brought into the land they now possessed, he had but briefly to allude to. After all this, they had left their own victorious Jehovah for the dead idols of the defeated Canaanites. In the land which was His gift they had forgotten Him, and that again and again, after repeated deliverances. Their present sin was but a repetition of that of their fathers: its root was in insubjection of heart, and unbelief.

(iii.) He appeals to God Himself for confirmation of this. In Israel they, as a matter of course, gathered in their wheat in peace, but now the wrath of God would be manifest in sending thunder and rain. These signs come to pass the same day, and produce a transient effect upon the people. In a spasm of fear they own their guilt, and deprecate the death which they anticipate. Samuel

Jehovah and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, [i]Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah thy God, that we die not, for we have added evil unto all our sins in asking for ourselves a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following Jehovah, but serve Jehovah with all your heart; and turn not aside after vain things that profit not nor deliver, for they are vain. For Jehovah for his great name's sake [j]will not forsake his people, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you his people. As for me also, far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to [k]pray for you; and I will show you the good and the right way. [l]Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for see how [m]great things he hath done with you. But if indeed ye do wickedly, ye shall [n]perish, both ye and your king.

4. (xiii. 1-9.) The trial and fall of the king.

[1][Saul was . . . . .* years old when he became king: and he reigned two years over Israel;] and Saul chose

i ver. 23. *cf.* Deut. 5. 24-29.

j Ps. 94. 14. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5.

k *cf.* Ex. 32. 30-32.

l Deut. 5. 29.

m Mk. 5. 19.

n Josh. 24. 20. *cf.* Is. 1. 7, 8.

*One number is wanting here, and cannot be supplied from any known source; the other is questionable. The Septuagint omits the verse altogether, which on more accounts than this commends itself to me. But I have bracketed and left it. It seems an interruption in the course of the history, the second verse naturally connecting with the end of the last chapter.

reassures them, bidding them only fear Jehovah with a fruitful fear, productive of obedience, and He would be with them; on the other hand, if still they did wickedly, they and their king alike would perish.

(iv.) Saul is now fully installed: he is accepted of the people and in the flush of a first victory. But the testing time has thus now come, and he must stand the test or be set aside. He does not stand the test, for he has no true faith in God, and is thus under the power of circumstances. He is slow and undecided when prompt action is called for, and then is forced into doing when he ought to have waited. Thus he openly disobeys God, and is of necessity set aside.

In natural courage he is not deficient, but natural courage without faith only begets self-confidence, and leads astray, while just where needed it is apt to break down and leave one in the lurch. Here, too, a man's religion, which without faith is only superstition, becomes a hindrance, as we shall see in Saul.

His first act, after the victory over Nahash, judged by natural wisdom, is prudent enough. The rally in behalf of Jabesh-Gilead has brought together an ill-armed and undisciplined multitude, which, however effective under a sudden impulse, could not be trusted for a prolonged and regular war. To have kept so large a number together, had it been feasible, would have surely provoked a Philistine attack, and being unmanageable, the greater mass would have produced a worse defeat. Saul sends them all home, therefore, except three thousand men, too few to rouse the suspicion of those who had been rapidly assuming to be masters in Israel, and yet enough to occupy some central strong points, of which there were many in that mountainous land, and to be the nucleus of a trained and efficient army. The old days of Samuel had already passed away. The fruits of unbelief are not long in showing themselves. And in Saul's action we see not a return to faith, but the wise caution of worldly prudence and astute generalship. Every thing has to be calculated and provided for. God is left out, for He is a force not calculable; but being left out, He is still at liberty to come in and spoil these arrangements, as we shall see: though He act in mercy toward His people, as now He does; but just on that account the human machinery must be set aside.

him three thousand men out of Israel; and there were with Saul two thousand in Michmash and in Mount Bethel; and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan [o]smote the post of the Philistines that was in Geba; and the Philistines heard [it]. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the [p]Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten the post of the Philistines, and that Israel also had become in ill savor with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand [q]chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people like the sand which is on the sea-shore for multitude; and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven. And the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were straitened), and the people [r]hid themselves in caves, and in

o *cf.* ch. 10. 5. ch. 14. 1.

p *cf.* Gen. 14. 13. ver. 7.

q Judg. 1. 19.

r Judg. 6. 2.

Two thousand men under Saul occupy the strong and important position of Michmash and Mount Bethel; a thousand are under Jonathan at Gibeah: and this introduces us to one in whom we have at this time—and Saul had also in close proximity to himself—the man of faith, through whom God works the deliverance which He has prepared for His people. Jonathan, or Jehonathan, means, "Jehovah hath given:" and he is truly the Lord's gift to Israel for the emergency; but also this is the language of his own believing heart, a sort of blank check, which can be filled up for every occasion. We shall find how fully he makes use of it now, though the first effect seems only to upset all the prudential device, and threaten disaster. But he is really with God, and we find in him what Saul should have been and was not. With him there is no tardiness, no prudence: put arms in his hands and he will use them. With one bold act of defiance, he precipitates the unequal conflict with those whose strength the nation had so often proved,—at this time comparatively at the strongest. He smites the Philistine post at Geba, and the Philistines hear.

Saul cannot now lead: he must follow; but he follows in a path of which he has no knowledge, acting in the dark where he imagines he has full light. There is no caution now, no seeking wisdom from God. He has just dismissed the mass that had gathered against the Ammonites; now again he summons them in haste with the trumpet; but God has no use for them: a general fear falls upon the people; those that gather after Saul melt away again; he is left to his dismay; and the actual victory is gained by two people whose absence is only in this way discovered! What an object lesson of faith is given us here!

While faith triumphs, as it ever does, things have gone disastrously with Saul. He sees not God, sees only circumstances; and where he moves most freely and confidently, is in fact moved helplessly by them. He must have a rising of the people to meet the wave of hostile invasion. He summons them as "Hebrews," not as Israelites; for of Israel, the people of God, he knows really nothing. They hear that *Saul* has smitten the post of the Philistines, leaving God out of the matter as Saul had left Him out. Unbelief awakens only unbelief; and then in opposition to Saul they naturally see the Philistines. Israel has come to be in ill savor also with the Philistines. They are called together after Saul to Gilgal. Where is the glorious Captain of the Lord's host that once met them there? Now they only realize the host of the Philistines, to their eyes innumerable, who presently take possession of the passes to the upper country. So seeing they are in a strait they scatter, hiding themselves in holes in the rocks and in the ground.

thickets, and in cliffs, and in strongholds, and in pits. And Hebrews [s]went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. And Saul was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him [t]trembling. And he tarried seven days, [u]according to the set time of which Samuel [had spoken];* but Samuel had not come to Gilgal, and the people were being scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring me the burnt-offering and peace-offerings: and [v]he offered the burnt-offering.

5. (xiii. 10–14.) His sentence.

5 And it was so that, when he had finished offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the [w]people were being scattered from me, and that thou camest not at the appointed time, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash, then I said, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to Jehovah. And I [x]forced myself, and offered the burnt-offering. And Samuel said unto Saul,

s *cf.* Num. 32. 1, etc.

t ch. 14. 15.

u ch. 10. 8.

v *cf.* Lev. 1. 5. 2 Chr. 26. 16, etc.

w ch. 15. 24.

x *ctr.* ch. 14. 19.

* The word is not in the Hebrew copies generally; but several MSS. have it.

And "*Hebrews*" make their escape altogether out of the threatened district, going over Jordan to Gad and Gilead. A company remain with Saul, but they follow him trembling. In this direction there is no hope.

A grand opportunity for a man of God! and so it proves for Jonathan. It might have seemed that even Saul would be now driven to Him. Our extremity is still His opportunity, and this is what He would assure us of. The conviction of helplessness contains oftentimes in itself the seed of faith; and the famine and a world where no man gives, have been to how many prodigals constraining influences to bring about the cry, "I will arise and go to my Father!" But with Saul it is far otherwise, and the failure now is nothing incidental to the circumstances in which he is found, but the real and full manifestation of the man himself.

He is now in the position of which Samuel had forewarned him before his anointing, (chap. x. 8,) and in obedience to his injunction he waits till near the close of the seventh day,—till it has advanced so far, indeed, that it seems as if there was now no hope of Samuel's coming. The people are being scattered from him. His mind, sensitive as to external ordinances just in proportion to his inability to see beneath them, can only realize the failure (which was not his) in the matter of the sacrifice. In open disobedience he offers (or causes to be offered) the burnt-offering; and he has hardly done this before Samuel comes.

(v.) It was a plain breach of positive command. Saul might and does urge the scattering of the people, the failure of Samuel (too quickly assumed that), the gathered Philistines. With all this he had nothing at all to do. The king of Israel was but the representative of the heavenly King, whose people Israel really was, and whose will alone was absolute throughout all circumstances that might arise. How good, in fact, to have it so! How entirely at rest might a king be so governing! As to any lack of understanding of that will, there was given the utmost liberty of appeal to Him through known and readily available channels of communication. With consequences he had nothing whatever to do. Were ever any king's shoulders so entirely relieved of strain as those of the obedient king of such a kingdom?

Saul had not the spirit of obedience, and there was no harshness, no undue

Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not [y]kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God which he commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom over Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not [z]stand: Jehovah hath sought him a man after his [a]own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him prince over his people: because thou hast not observed what Jehovah commanded thee.

[y] ch. 15. 22.

[z] ch. 15. 28. *ctr.* 2 Sam. 7. 8-17.

[a] ch. 12. 13. Acts 13. 22. *cf.* Lk. 9. 35.

(XIII. 15-XIV. 46.)

Saul, the man under the government of God, and Jonathan, the man with God. 1. (xiii. 15-22.)

5. [1]And Samuel arose, and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin; and Saul numbered the people that were found with him, about [b]six hundred men. And Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were found with them abode in Geba of Benjamin; and the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers went out of the camp of the Philistines in [c]three companies: one company turned by the way of Ophrah to the land of Shual; and another company turned the way of Beth-horon; and another company turned the way of the border that looketh over the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. Now there was no [d]smith found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears.

[b] *ctr.* ch. 11. 8. *cf.* Judg. 7. 2, 7.

[c] ch. 11. 11.

[d] *cf.* Acts 18. 27, 28 with Eph. 4. 11, 12.

Sufficiency must be of God.

severity in his rejection by God. As yet even it does not amount to present personal rejection. It is announced only that his kingdom should not continue, and that God had sought Him a king after His own heart,—manifestly one who would govern according to His will, which, in the main, was David's character. The two kingdoms must be in harmony. But Saul is yet left to recover, if it may be, the ground he had lost. Such is the mercy of the divine government, which we may see afterwards, even with a king so exceptionally bad as Ahab. (1 Kings xxi. 29.) Yet this mercy of God allows, too, the development of evil in the unrepentant; and this we have to find in a striking manner in Saul. "Because judgment against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil."

5. Side by side now, in contrasted development, we have in Saul the man without God, under the government of God, whose position as the ostensible, responsible head in Israel only emphasizes the lesson here. He is but the obstruction in the path of faith which we find in Jonathan, the man with God, whom Saul, though bound to him by every natural tie, would slay. Such is the essential opposition between what is natural and what is spiritual, even where, as here, it is not enmity, but a blind and superstitious zeal for God,—under which, however, all carnal and evil passions find ready lodgment. On the other hand, Saul's strength, such as it is, is easily seen to be based upon Jonathan's victories, which are crippled only by their connection with him, while Jonathan himself, though to the last attractive and interesting, soon ceases to have significance for the history at large, and at last expires under the shadow of a terrible humiliation upon the field of Gilboa. Impressive lessons, more than ever to be heeded to-day, when, through this very heedlessness, the history spiritually so often repeats itself.

(i.) In the first place, here we are made to realize the circumstances in the midst of which faith finds its opportunity. The land is prostrate. Unbelief has speedily completed its work. The deliverance wrought by Samuel is undone, and the Philistine spoiler is abroad over the country. Saul has, indeed, his six hundred men; but they are spiritless, and armed but with rustic and blunted weapons. This barrenness of resources is, however, only God's hand shutting

And all Israel went down to the Philistines, to get every one his plowshare [e]sharpened, and his hoe, and his axe, and his sickle, when the edges of the sickles, and the hoes, and the forks, and the axes were blunted; and to set the goads. And so it was that in the day of battle [f]neither sword nor spear was found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but there was with Saul and with Jonathan his son.

[e] *cf.* Judg. 3. 31.

[f] Judg. 5. 8.

2. (xiii. 23–xiv. 15.) The activity of faith.

[2] And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash. And it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, [g]Come, and let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines, that is on the other side; but he [h]told not his father. And Saul lay in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate which is in Migron, and the people that were with him were about six hundred men, and Ahijah the son of Ahitub, the brother of [i]Ichabod, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, Jehovah's priest in Shiloh, wearing the ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan had gone away. Now between the passes by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a [j]sharp rock on one side, and a sharp rock on the other side; and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other, Seneh. The one rock [formed] a pillar on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south, opposite Geba. And Jonathan said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the garrison of these [k]uncircumcised: it may be

[g] *cf.* ch. 26. 6.

[h] *cf.* ver. 27.

[i] ch. 4. 21.

[j] *cf.* Zech. 4. 7.

[k] ch. 17. 26.

them up to Himself. It is the prostration which makes Him their necessity; but, in general, there is no faith either to lay hold of Him. What would an army of such men accomplish? Nothing but their own defeat. Hence Jonathan, in whom faith is, will not burden himself with them: energized by God, he strikes with his own hand for deliverance, and strikes effectually.

(ii.) Jonathan knows well that "two cannot walk together except they are agreed," that faith can take no counsel with unbelief; and when he starts against the Philistine garrison at Geba, he tells not his own father. Saul and his six hundred are shown us for a moment as he turns his back on them, Saul lying under the pomegranate at Migron (the place of "overthrow"); and with the failed king, the head of the failed priesthood, Ahijah ("brother of Jah"), son of Ahitub ("brother of goodness"), but the brother of Ichabod ("where is the glory?"), the monument of the sad history of Eli and his sons. With him is the ephod, expressly for communication with Jehovah, but there is none; and none among the people even know that Jonathan is gone away. Victory may be gained *for* these, not *by* them. They may enter presently upon a path which others have opened: open it they cannot.

Jonathan therefore goes forth alone, with only his armor-bearer with him, in whom faith responds to his own faith. Two things, as we find by his words, animate him: that the Philistines are the "uncircumcised," the enemies of Israel, the people of God; and that "there is no restraint to Jehovah, to save by many or by few." He believes in an omnipotent God who loves His people, and upon whom to venture for their salvation can surely be no mistake. He has no express command, no open call to accomplish this: he *reasons;* but he reasons from premises which faith furnishes, and from the depths of his own self-

that Jehovah will work for us; for there is [l]no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. And his armorbearer said unto him, [m]Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. And Jonathan said, Behold, we will pass over unto the men, and will discover ourselves to them. [n]If they say thus to us, Stand still until we come unto you, then will we stay in our place, and not go up unto them; and if they say thus, Come up to us, then will we go up; for Jehovah hath given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign for us. And they both discovered themselves to the garrison of the Philistines; and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews are [o]coming out of the holes in which they have been hiding themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said; Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armorbearer, Come up after me; for [p]Jehovah hath given them into Israel's hand. And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and on his feet, and his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan; and his armorbearer slew after him. And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made, was of about twenty men, as it were on the half-furrow of an acre of land.

*l* 2 Chr. 14. 11.

*m* *cf.* Phil. 3. 17.

*n* *cf.* ch. 20. 21–23. Gen. 24. 12–14.

*o* ch. 13. 6.

*p* Josh. 6.16.

sacrificing love to the people of God, which enables him sympathetically to realize the divine love. He does not at first speak with absolute assurance of success: he says, "it *may* be that Jehovah will work for us"; he knows God's heart better than His mind, gaining assurance as he goes on, willing to risk where the risk is all his own. Such believing love can never be unfruitful.

He finally accepts the enemy's own decision of the matter as the Lord's judgment. If they say, "Wait till we come down to you," the energy implied will, at least, not show that He is opening the way before him. But if they say, "Come up to us," then, whether it be indolence, indifference, or self-security, he will take it as the assurance that God has given them up into his hands.

There are abundant difficulties in those steep cliffs which overhang the bold adventurers' path. Two points, on opposite sides, are mentioned,—not surely as mere commemorative indications of the place for days to come, but with a deeper interest. One, Bozez, was named from its "shining" surface, which, on the north side, (that of the enemy's post,) would have the sun full upon it. The other, on Israel's, would be correspondingly in the dark, and was called Seneh, the "thorn," the sign of the curse. Israel was, indeed, in the shadow of God's judgment then, as, on this account also, their enemies were in prosperity: and such things have been difficulties in the path of many a Jonathan from that day to this. But there is a faith which can surmount all, working through the love of a devoted heart; and we find it in this son of Saul, not, clearly, by any assistances of nature there.

The two discover themselves to the Philistine garrison in open day: for darkness does not favor the people of God, but the reverse. They are taunted with the cowardice that is not theirs, but is their brethren's, as the sins of professors merely are hurled at all times at the true confessors; and are bidden, "Come up unto us, and we will show you a thing": for with Philistines there is a height and superiority of knowledge inaccessible, in their judgment, to the "Israelite indeed." They know not that this is the sign that Jehovah has delivered them up, and that the battle is gone against them.

And there was [q]trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked; and there was a trembling [from] God.

3. (xiv. 16-23.) The reviving of Israel.

[3]And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away, and went on breaking up. And Saul said unto the people that were with him, [r]Muster now, and see who hath gone from us. And they mustered, and behold, Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahijah, Bring hither the [s]ark of God: for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass that, while Saul spake with the priest, the noise that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased; and Saul said unto the priest, [t]Withdraw thy hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him were gathered together and came to the battle; and behold, [u]every man's sword was against his fellow [and] there was a very great discomfiture. And the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, who had gone up with them into the camp round about, they also [v]turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

4. (xiv. 24-35.) The intrusion of the creature into the work of God, ending in further and wider evil.

And all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in [w]Mount Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, and they also followed hard after them in the battle. And Jehovah saved Israel that day; and the battle passed over beyond Bethaven.

[4]And the men of Israel were [z]distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, [y]Cursed be the

[q] ch. 13. 7.

[r] ver. 40, etc.

[s] *cf.* ch. 4. 3.

[t] ch. 13. 12.

[u] Judg. 7. 22. 2 Chr. 20. 23.

[v] Judg. 7. 23.

[w] ch. 9. 4. 2 Sam. 20. 21.

[x] *cf.* Acts 15. 10.

[y] *cf.* Acts 23. 12. *ctr.* Ps. 132. 1-5.

Jonathan and his companion, therefore, climb on hands and knees to the attack: knees as well as hands are a grand necessity in climbing *spiritual* heights: and the Philistines fall before them. Fear and trembling fall upon the host; and the earth trembles and quakes; for God Himself is there: the victory is already accomplished.

(iii.) As yet but two men have wrought, even the little band with Saul unconscious of their departure from them; but now the Israelites around begin to be awakened and to follow in the track that has been opened to them. The watchmen of Saul begin to realize the commotion and disintegration in the enemy's camp, and Saul imputes it to some human agency; but when the company is mustered, only Jonathan and another being absent, so slight a cause seems inadequate to the effect, and now he thinks of consulting God. But the noise increases in the camp, and the disorder among the Philistines being manifest, he abruptly stops the priest in the midst of his inquiry. He is pressed to God by great necessity; but he prefers much to do without Him. The matter is sufficiently plain for action. He gathers his company and goes out to battle, only to find that dissension has already precipitated disaster in the hostile ranks. The "Hebrews" recreant or captive among them turn against them; the Israelites who have been in hiding around swarm after the flying host. The broken wave of battle ebbs away toward the west. It is Jehovah who that day saves Israel.

(iv.) But the spirit of Saul is in entire independence. If Jehovah work, it is for *him* He works; and in his short-sighted desire for vengeance upon *his* enemies, he freely imprecates Jehovah's curse upon the soul that does not obey *his* mandate

man that eateth food until the evening, and I be avenged of mine enemies; and none of the people tasted food. And all [they of] the land came unto a wood, and there was [z]honey on the ground. And when the people came into the wood, behold, the honey flowed: but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people were afraid of the oath. And Jonathan had not [a]heard when his father charged the people with the oath, and he put forth the [b]end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes were [c]enlightened. And one of the people answered and said, Thy father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth food to-day. And the people were [d]faint. And Jonathan said, My father hath [e]troubled the land; see now how my eyes have been lightened because I tasted a little of this honey. How much [f]more if the people had freely eaten of the spoil of their enemies which they found: for would there not have been to-day a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Ajalon. And the people were very faint. And the people [g]fell upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the [h]blood. And they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against Jehovah, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have done perversely: roll me now a great stone. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring near to me every one his ox, and every one his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against Jehovah by eating with the blood. And all the

z Lev. 2. 11. Prov. 25. 16, 17.

a *cf.* Num. 30. 1, etc.

b *cf.* 1 Cor. 7. 29–31.

c Acts 27. 3, 34.

d ch. 30. 10.

e ver. 24.

f *cf.* Judg. 7. 8. Col. 2. 20–23.

g Deut. 12. 16.

h Lev. 3. 17. Lev. 17. 10–12.

to abstain from food until vengeance is executed. He thus makes the might of Jehovah's name to work against the very thing he would accomplish; and limits, as far as he may, the effect of that which he had no part in producing. He can meddle and mar, if he cannot make. In his profanity he would have God curse where He means only blessing, heedless where the curse may fall. The people are faint, and the victory is incomplete. Jonathan, the instrument of the divine deliverance, is the one who falls under the futile curse. Too far away from the scene to have heard his father's adjuration, he takes a little of the wild honey which offers itself by the way, and is refreshed. Told of his father's curse he reprobates it, and shows its evil consequences. Honey is the sweetness of natural things, not to be ascetically interdicted to the people of God, though to be kept in due subordination. The world is, indeed, a place of warfare for the Christian, in which he may "not *entangle* himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. ii. 4.) We have need to watch lest we should be brought under the power of lawful things (1 Cor. vi. 12). But herein every one must judge for himself what is help, what hindrance, while it is grace alone that enables, and not law.

Saul's prohibition leads to further evil. The famishing people, wild with hunger, fall at last upon the prey, and slaughtering sheep and oxen, eat them with the blood, in plain disobedience to the divine command. Thus an undue restriction leads to license, and the imposition of an arbitrary human enact-

people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slaughtered it there.

5. (xiv. 35–46.) The end in divine government.

[5] And Saul built an [i]altar to Jehovah: the same was the first altar that he built unto Jehovah. And Saul said, [j]Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them till the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Whatsoever seemeth good unto thee, do. And the priest said, Let us [k]draw near hither unto God. And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will thou give them into Israel's hand? But he [l]answered him not that day. And Saul said, Draw near hither, all ye heads of the people; and understand and see wherein this sin hath been this day: for, as Jehovah liveth, which saveth Israel, [m]though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die: and none of all the people answered him. And he said unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what is good in thine eyes. And Saul said unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, [n]Give a perfect [lot]. And Saul and Jonathan were taken, and the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast [lots] between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. And Saul said unto Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a [o]little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, [and] lo, I must die! And Saul said, God do so, and more also; for thou shalt [p]surely die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this [q]great deliverance

[i] Judg. 6. 24.
[j] *cf.* ver. 1.
[k] ch. 9. 6.
[l] *cf.* ch. 28. 6.
[m] *cf.* Judg. 11. 34–36.
[n] Josh. 7. 17. ch. 10. 20.
[o] ver. 27.
[p] ch. 22. 16.
[q] ch. 11. 13.

ment to a transgression of the divine: and these things occur not seldom in this way.

(v.) Saul builds now an altar to Jehovah: he has need of Him, and formally acknowledges Him. He desires and proposes still to pursue the Philistines, and gains the consent of the people. It is the priest, who urges that God must be consulted first. Saul asks, accordingly, "Shall I go down after the Philistines?" and his proud spirit chafes at there being no answer to the question. He realizes that there has been sin somewhere, and evidently divines that it is in the transgression of his own rash prohibition; seems even to imagine (perhaps from Jonathan's having been away when it was uttered) that it may be he: yet, instead of being smitten into the dust by the thought, or showing the least repentance for his reckless haste, boils over in a furious vow by Jehovah, that if it were in Jonathan himself, he should die. The people gaze upon him speechless. He brings it to a brief decision by putting himself and Jonathan over against the people for the lot to point out the guilty. He and Jonathan are taken: at the next casting Jonathan is taken: and Saul is face to face with the consequences of his deed.

But he is still unsubdued: stonily he questions the deliverer of Israel, What hast thou done? and hears his simple, straightforward account: "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and lo, I must die," to answer with another imprecation upon the self, dearer loved than is his child, "God do so [to me] and more also, but thou shalt surely die, Jonathan!"

Then the people break out in a wave of astonishment and indignation, putting

in Israel? far be it! as Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. And the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. And Saul went up from following the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place.

(XIV. 47-XV.)

Amalek overcome, overcomes. 1. (xiv. 47-52.) Saul's might.

6. [1]And Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against [r]all his enemies round about, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines; and whithersoever he turned himself, he discomfited them. And he did valiantly, and smote Amalek, and delivered Israel out of the hand of them that spoiled them.

r ch. 12. 14. cf. 2 Sam. 8. 1-14.

with emphatic decision their oath against the king's oath. What! Jonathan, who has wrought, in the power of God, this deliverance of Israel? Jonathan die for the breach of a command he never knew, and by which Saul's own madness had snatched the full fruits of the victory out of the deliverer's hand? Nay, "as Jehovah liveth, there shall not a hair of his head fall to the ground!"

So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not; and Saul is left to his folly and shame. The whole matter, from beginning to end, has been one continued humiliation for the infatuated king. The man himself is unmistakably revealed; while on God's part how great is the mercy shown,—how tender, if solemn, is the rebuke administered! And the divine patience is not exhausted yet.

6. Another test is to be permitted Saul; and as, in the former case he was under the pressure of circumstances which might plead, if not convincingly, for him, so now he is forborne with till he has gathered strength. One readily perceives, indeed, danger for him in this; but it is the only alternative. What he is, and whether Jehovah's king for the people, must be proved; and nothing can prove so fully as when all constraint is taken off, and the will is allowed its fullest liberty. It is not meant, of course, but that he is under the commandment of God: this is, of necessity, wherewith he is to be tried: the kingdom on earth is to be the true representative and executive of the kingdom in heaven: but obedience is to be made a question of pure will, with no hindrance to it from outside, no resistance except it be from the will itself.

The means of the ordained trial we have in Amalek; and here, as elsewhere, to have the full lesson, the spiritual meaning of the people must be taken into account. In both Exodus and Numbers we have seen that as the offspring of Edom Amalek stands for the lusts of the flesh (Ex. xvii., Num. xxiv., *n.*). In Balaam's prophecy it is when the Scepter rises out of Israel, and out of Jacob comes one who hath dominion,—in other words, when Christ comes again,—that "Amalek shall perish forever." Till then his hand is "against the throne of Jah," and "Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Thus the destruction of Amalek is a sign of the true King having come to Israel.

The lusts of the flesh are indeed the very expression of the rebellious war against Jehovah's throne; and he in whom these are found can never be Jehovah's rightful king. There is but One, then, who can be this; and Saul is not even His typical picture,—no, not for a moment. Of the issue of Saul's trial here we shall have presently to speak.

(i.) But first we are given to see his might. After the deliverance at Michmash he takes, indeed, the kingdom over Israel, and wars against all his enemies round about, and discomfits them, Philistines and Amalekites and all. "He did valiantly, and delivered Israel out of the hand of them that spoiled them."

And the [s]sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Malchishua; and the names of his two daughters,—the name of the first-born Merab, and the name of the

[s] ch. 31. 2.

Externally he is thus a prosperous man; no enemy at this time prevails against him: but in all this prosperity we have no hint of any real dependence on the Lord, nor of the Lord's hand being stretched out for him. His resources are in himself. We read presently of his sons, his daughters, his wife, his cousin Abner, the captain of his host. There the record stops. He gathers no mighty men around him, as David does: he wins no heart, for he shows no heart. He is self-contained, self-centred; and thus the very king whom the people seek, though having found him, it is true he does not satisfy them. There is nothing in him to do so; and yet he is the perfect picture of what men applaud: "for men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." (Ps. xlix. 18.) The Sauls make up the history of the world, though a few souls may cluster around David.

Saul is a representative man, and thus we may well be interested in him. Not in vain does he occupy so many pages of an inspired history. His wars and his family relations, as given here, should all have meaning. As king of Israel he is in conflict with all the natural enemies of Israel, and here he shows his might. He discomfits them, but he does not destroy or subjugate them: even Amalek is not an exception to this, as we shall see. He is very far from leaving, as his successor does, "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." (1 Kings v. 4.) He dies in battle, defeated by the Philistines; an Amalekite claims to have given him his death-stroke; all the enemies have to be met afresh by the next king. He is under the law of nature simply, has his rise, culmination, and decline; but this with him, as with all under it, has a moral significance such as the psalmist attaches to it: "we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath we are troubled." (Ps. xc. 7.) The secret is as to Saul in his growing alienation from God, which is manifest, an awful hardening of heart terrible to contemplate, yet not so exceptional as to make it in any wise unsuited for an admonition to us. For here is the man that the multitude crowns with glory, while for the true king they have the cross and the crown of thorns.

And thus it is that we are in Saul's reign still, and not in David's; and the world occupies itself with laws and forms of government, while it knows not Christ, nor sees glory in God's Beloved. A democracy under Satan would certainly have the suffrages of the mass to-day, rather than the sweet despotism of the Son of God. Yet men go frantic over wrongs that are only the twigs and branches from the root of this first great wrong. Saul, too, could lash at Israel's enemies, but they survived him, pulled him from his seat, and conquered him at last; and so will the world's efforts at self-government break down in hopeless anarchy and confusion before Christ comes to lay his right hand of power upon the strife, and still it into peace.

Saul's sons, as given here, are three, though we learn elsewhere of a fourth, who does not come into this picture, Ish-bosheth,—according to the meaning of of his name, the "man of shame," the only one who survives his father. The three here are his strength, but they all fall with him upon the fatal field of Gilboa.

Of Jonathan alone do we hear anything; and of him, the hero of Michmash and the lover of David, more often as in conflict with his father than otherwise. Yet Saul, with such heart as he had, loved Jonathan,—though, as we have seen, he would have sacrificed him to his superstition and pride, and afterwards to his rage against David. Jonathan means "Jehovah hath given," the principle upon which, as we have seen, he acts at Michmash. Jonathan thus seems to represent the sovereignty of God, which, in fact, upholds as ordained of Him "the powers that be," which Saul represents, though in themselves as little according to His mind as Saul was. This ordination is, therefore, not that electing love which originates what He approves, but that which takes them up simply as existent,

younger Michal. And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of

in that sense is the *fruit* of their existence, (for the "powers that *be*" are ordained of God *as such*), and so can be rightly imaged as a *son* of Saul, his firstborn, as Jacob says of Reuben, his "might, the beginning of excellence and of power." Yet it is clear that in this case Jonathan cannot be against David, even while he owns Saul, and why he expires with him upon the field where he expires. All this is simple. The victory over the Philistines at Michmash, due to him, is less so. Yet, if the Philistines represent the power of the ritualistic world-church, this has long, as we know, been in conflict with — at first largely dominant over — what for the true people of God must be the rightful possessor of authority under God, even though as yet Saul, not David. The effort of the world-church, throughout the middle ages, was to put its yoke upon the kings of the earth; and the reformation was such a victory as that at Michmash, when the ordination of God of the secular power, realized in Israel — among the people of God — beat off the Philistine oppressor. Yet, alas, there was no David on *that* throne: it could but restore a Saul! All is consistent, therefore, throughout.

Saul's second son, Ishui, is much more scantily noticed in the history. In fact, even the name occurs only here, being replaced, where his death is spoken of, by Abinadab (ch. xxxi. 2).

Ishui, or Ishvi, from *shavah*, "to be equal," means "equal, equitable," and this, under the number of service, ministry, speaks unmistakably of one of the very reasons for which the powers that be are ordained of God: "he is the minister of God to thee, for good." (Rom. xiii. 3, 4.) "Do that which is good," says the apostle, "and thou shalt have praise of the same." This is the *general* truth, whatever exception there may be; and in striking contrast with Philistine oppression. When the "church," as the superior, delivered up its victims into the hands of the obedient civil power, there was no equity! The second son of Saul confirms thus the meaning of the first.

Malchishua, "my king is saviour," is the third son. Though in an inferior sense, of course, in fact Saul was saviour-king. And, in fact, also for society, and for the church also, the secular magistrate is a necessity. This is evident from what has just been said, and need not be considered further. These are the sons of Saul which strengthen him in his kingdom. That there is another side is true also, and an Ishbosheth, "a man of shame," among them; but it is in striking accordance with the view presented here that Ishbosheth should be in this place omitted.

Saul's daughters are but two, Merab and Michal. Their names have evident connection. Merab, from *rabah*, means "increase." Michal, though generally taken as "brook," seems properly to mean "who shall measure?" As *daughters* they naturally also speak of fertility, fruit. Do they imply the prosperity and wealth that are the result of established government? — as to which the Philistines are here also (as seen in their city, Ashdod) "spoilers" in every sense?

Next we have Saul's wife. She is Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The repetition of the first element in these names demands attention. Ahi means "my brother," or "brother, kin." *Noam* is "pleasure, that which pleases"; *maaz*, though by Gesenius taken to mean "anger," is rather (from *atzah*) "strength." "Pleasure," as the consort of a king, and the outcome of "strength," is simple enough reading. Among those set in high places, how natural and sure the abuse of strength that thence results! But pleasure may be sought *without* abuse. All depends here upon *what* pleases, and in some sort also upon what the strength is. In the case of Saul, and such as he, the double *ahi* marks this. The "*kin* of pleasure" is not pleasure; the "*kin* of strength" is not that. A false power, not of God, the source of all that is true, may be perverted for the enjoyment of pleasure, which is not true because not of Him. And here, alas, the Sauls find their affinities and ally themselves: they walk in the vain show of the world, and disquiet themselves, too, in vain.

the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner, were sons of Abiel. And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any [t]strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.

2. (xv. 1-9.) The commission and war with Amalek.

[2]And Samuel said unto Saul, Jehovah sent *me* to [u]anoint thee king over His people, over Israel: now, therefore, hearken to the voice of the words of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I have marked that which [v]Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and execute the ban on all that they have, and [w]spare them not, but put to death both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. And Saul summoned the people, and mustered them in

t ch. 8. 11. *ctr.* ch. 22. 1, 2.

u ch. 10. 1.

v Ex. 17. 8-16. De. 25. 17-19.

w Josh. 6. 17, 18.

Thus we have Saul's sons, daughters, and wife: we are now called to consider the captain of his host; and this is Abner, the son of Ner. The peculiarity of the name strikes one at once; for Abner means "the *father* of Ner," while he is his *son:* there is an inversion of fact. Ner means "lamp," the receptacle of light, the symbol of joy, prosperity, and all that we naturally connect with the thought of illumination. David is thus spoken of as "the light [or lamp] of Israel." (2 Sam. xxi. 17.) And though Ishbosheth were a poor representative of this, yet Abner's support of him after Saul's death may well illustrate the assumption of his name, in which are marked the pride and self-sufficiency that characterize Saul himself. He was the suited general of such a king, though we find nothing really great done by or attributed to him: and that is in keeping with the rest. Both Abner and Saul trace their descent from a certain Abiel, "the father of might," and thus heredity exhibits itself clearly in them. But with men assumption largely carries the day; and "the father [or sustainer] of light" may well be Saul's ordinary commander-in-chief, if Jonathan or David do the real work. But here is the might of Saul.

(ii.) Saul being thus established in his kingdom, and having realized his power, he is now to be tested as to his fitness for the work of the kingdom, which is the expression of the heavenly one, on earth. With the mind of God so accessible as in Israel it was, all that is required for this is obedience; but this is absolutely necessary, and must be prompt, unhesitating. Samuel is therefore sent to Saul with the command to destroy Amalek. The reason of the command is given also, that he may intelligently enter into fellowship with God about it. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,"— the King, as he is thus reminded, of the higher kingdom,—"I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way when he came up out of Egypt." The debt, long since contracted, had never been repented of, forgiveness had never been sought for it, the Amalek of that day remaining the same adversary of God and His people, and thus had only acquired interest in the lapse of time. Indeed, they had again and again appeared as enemies in the land since then. This is always the reason of divine delay in judgment, that there is yet opportunity of mercy, and "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Now the debt was to be exacted. "Now go and smite Amalek, and execute the ban upon all they have, and spare them not." They are sentenced, as God alone has right to sentence, to complete extermination, with all that they have, even to the cattle. Such object-lessons of divine wrath upon sin the world at large needed, as Israel themselves did; and we may be sure, in effect, were mercy.

Saul gathers his host, a large one, and sets out to execute his commission; nor do we read of any difficulty attending it. No details are given; the Spirit of

Telaim, [x]two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul went to the city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the [y]Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I join you with them; and ye showed kindness unto all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. And the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote Amalek from Havilah till thou come to Shur, which is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of Amalek [z]alive, and he executed the ban upon all the people with the edge of the sword. And Saul and the people [a]spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and oxen, (even the second-rate,) and the lambs, and all that was [b]good, and would not execute the ban on them; but every thing that was [c]bad and poor, on that they executed it.

x *ctr.* ch. 14. 2.

y Judg. 1. 16.

z 2 Sam. 1. 8.

a 1 Kl. 20. 32-34.

b *ctr.* Phil. 3. 3-9.

c *cf.* Lk. 18. 11, 18-30.

8. (xv. 10-23.) The divine oracle.

[3]And the word of Jehovah came unto Samuel, saying, It [d]repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my words. And it stirred Samuel; and he cried unto Jehovah all the night. And Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he hath set him up a [e]monument, and turned about, and passed on, and gone down to [f]Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou

d Gen. 6. 6.

e *cf.* Dan. 4. 30.

f ch. 13. 8, 15, etc.

God passes to the one part of sorrowful interest here, that, in plain inexcusable disobedience to the command of God, "Saul and the people" spare Agag, the king of Amalek, with the best of all the sheep and oxen, executing the ban on what was bad and poor only,—wholesale rebellion against the Lord of hosts!

The lesson is a deeply solemn one, and wider in application than perhaps we would easily allow. If Amalek stand here as elsewhere for the lusts of the flesh, alas, is it not true that we measure our judgment of these often more by our own tastes than by the simple letter of the word of God? How easy it is to judge the multitude of things, and spare the worst of all, the Agag! And things which *minister* to the lusts of the flesh are unhesitatingly allowed, if only they are not what to common estimate would be considered vile. Our judgments, how apt are they to be those of the world at large rather than of God,—in the light of nature rather than of the sanctuary!

(iii.) The divine word announces to the prophet the failure of Saul once more. "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me, and has not performed my words." God speaks as man that we may understand Him. He would rather have His wisdom called in question than His holiness. His repentance is one of act, founded on His reprobation of sin. The news "kindles" the fervent spirit of the prophet, and he cries to God all night.

The spirit of Saul advertises itself sufficiently. He sweeps in a circuit through the land from Carmel to Gilgal, setting up by the way a monument, literally a "hand," pointing to his own achievements. It is at Gilgal Samuel meets him, the place of national circumcision, the "putting away the body of the flesh," and where the captain of the Lord's host comes to meet them. How great a change now as to both host and leader! Yet such is the deceitfulness of sin that Saul comes confidently forward with the assertion, "I have performed Jehovah's

of Jehovah: I have [g]performed the word of Jehovah. And Samuel said, What, then, is this [h]bleating of sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the [i]people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to Jehovah thy God; and on the rest we have executed the ban. And Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah said to me this night. And he said unto him, Speak. And Samuel said, Wast thou not [j]little in thine own eyes, when thou [becamest] head of the tribes of Israel, and Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel? And Jehovah sent thee on the way, and said, Go, and execute the ban upon the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them till they be consumed. Why hast thou not hearkened to the voice of Jehovah, but hast rushed upon the spoil, and done evil in Jehovah's eyes? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have hearkened to Jehovah's voice, and gone in the way Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have performed the ban on Amalek. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of what was under ban, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah [k]delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in hearkening to Jehovah's voice? Behold, to [l]hearken is better than sacrifice, and to give heed than the fat of rams. For [m]rebellion is the sin of divination, and stubbornness is iniquity and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he also hath [n]rejected thee from being king.

4. (xv. 24–31.) The creature rather than the Creator.

[4]And Saul said unto Samuel, I have [o]sinned, for I have transgressed against the voice of Jehovah and thy words, because I feared the [p]people and hearkened to their voice. And now, I pray [q]thee, forgive my sin,

g *ctr.* ver. 9.
h *cf.* Acts. 5. 1–6.
i ch. 13. 11.
j ch. 9. 21. ch. 10. 22, 23.
k Is. 1. 11–14. ver. 13.
l Prov. 21. 3. Jer. 7. 22, 23.
m Num. 16. 12.
n *cf.* ch. 13. 14.
o *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 13.
p ver. 15, etc.
q *ctr.* Ps. 51. 4.

word." But there are many noisy witnesses in contradiction of this, the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen that they had brought from the Amalekites. Even the plea of sacrificing them to God is vain; for that which was already devoted could not be offered. Yet Saul again affirms this; when Samuel answers that to give heed is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. How low, indeed, was Saul's conception of the God with whom he had to do! Rebellion was, indeed, the very beginning of the worship of false gods, to which in some way man ever turns when he gives up the true. With this word of Samuel the final sentence falls: "because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, He also hath rejected thee from being king."

(iv.) The soul strong in rebellion against God may be toward man most pitifully weak indeed; and this is what Saul now exhibits. The fear of God destroys every other fear, and sets free from the most degrading bondage. Saul owns, while evidently he would excuse himself in measure by it, that he has put man in the place of God: "I have sinned, for I have transgressed against the voice of Jehovah and thy words, because I feared the people, and hearkened to *their* voice." Manifestly, therefore, he is unfit for the place of king over Jehovah's people; and the sentence of displacement is the only possible one. Even now,

and turn back with me, that I may worship Jehovah.
And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not turn back with
thee, for thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, and
Jehovah hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.
And Samuel turned about to go away, and he laid hold
of the skirt of his mantle and it [r]rent. And Samuel
said unto him, Jehovah hath rent the kingdom of Is-
rael from thee this day, and hath given it to a neigh-
bor of thine that is better than thou. Moreover, the
Confidence of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is
not [s]man, that he should repent. And he said, I have
sinned: [t]honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders
of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with
me, that I may worship Jehovah thy God. And Sam-
uel turned again after Saul, and Saul worshiped Je-
hovah.

5. (xv. 32-35.) The doom of Agag.

[5]And Samuel said, Bring me Agag, king of Amalek.
And Agag came to him daintily. And Agag said,
Surely, the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel
said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall
thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel
[u]hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal. And
Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house,
to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel saw Saul [v]no more to
the day of his death; but Samuel mourned for Saul;
and Jehovah repented that he had made Saul king over
Israel.

r 1 Kl. 11. 11.

s Num. 23. 19. Jas. 1. 17.
t cf. ch. 2. 30.

u Judg. 1. 6, 7.

v ch. 28. 11-19.

while he pleads with Samuel yet to turn back with him, that he may worship Jehovah, the fear of the people is still upon him. Samuel refuses, repeating the judgment just pronounced; and when, Saul laying hold upon the skirt of his mantle, the garment tears, he uses this to illustrate and confirm the fact that Jehovah has similarly rent the kingdom from him, to give it into the hand of one better than himself. Nor will He in whom Israel confides repent: for He is not like him whom Saul has preferred before Him.

Again Saul owns his sin, and again he shows the power that is upon him. Will not Samuel at least honor him before the elders of the people, by turning with him, that he may worship Jehovah? And Samuel, thus appealed to, turns and does so.

(v.) Samuel has yet another duty to perform. The judgment of God must be executed upon the king of Amalek, and he executes it: he hews Agag to pieces before Jehovah. With us, also, there must be the unsparing judgment of that which God has condemned. Faith must use resolutely "the sword of the Spirit, which is the saying of God," and hew down the fairest and most royal forms of flesh, which are on that account so often spared. The Sauls of every generation fail here. The powers that be may in some degree destroy what is vile and refuse; but they judge not as God judges: the sword upon Agag can be wielded by the prophet's hand alone.

Saul is for this set aside; and the powers of earth are doomed. Yet "a king shall reign in righteousness and princes decree justice." God has sought and found Him a king after His own heart.

## DIVISION 3. (Chap. xvi.–2 Sam. ix.)

*David, the king after God's heart.*

### SUBDIVISION 1. (Chap. xvi.-xxxi.)

*The obedience of the destined king.*

(XVI.-XVII. 54.)

Unique sufficiency.

(1.xvi.1-13.) The king elect.

1.[1] AND Jehovah said unto Samuel, how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, when I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the [w]Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons. And

w Ruth 1. 1.

DIV. 3.

Of this glorious King David is but a type: an interesting and beautiful picture, but with many flaws and shortcomings even as that. We shall have to see, even in the case of David, the higher kingdom at issue with the lower, and having to vindicate itself in a decisive way from misrepresentation by its representative on earth. David is not set aside as Saul is, for he bows in truth of heart to the chastening hand upon him. He "hears the rod, and who has appointed it." (Mic. vi. 9.) He despises not the chastening of the Lord, nor faints when he is rebuked of Him. Nowhere do we find a deeper penitence, a lowlier self-confession, than in those psalms in which he pours out his soul to God. Still he is a penitent; and as such cannot represent aright the object of the Father's full delight. The shadow he is; but how far from the "very image"!

He is the man after God's own heart just because he is thus subject to Him. He is by no means perfect, but he is not a rebel. He has true faith in God, a heart that pants after Him; and that, finding Him, makes its boast in Him, and is glad. He is thus a true son of Judah, a worshiper, indeed the sweet psalmist of Israel, by whom the Spirit of Jehovah spake, and His word was in his tongue (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2). And as the joy of the Lord is strength, so does he find strength. Israel flourishes into such a kingdom as never before nor after do they attain. Its boundaries are lengthened out until the promise to Abraham seems nearly fulfilled; but this is not really so: from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt and the Red Sea David reigns over subject kings, but the people are far from possessing it as their own inheritance. Still it is the pledge and foreshadow of what shall be far more glorious, when "He shall come whose right it is," and whose reign shall be to the ends of the earth and for everlasting.

SUBD. 1.

For the king after God's heart suffering must precede glory. He must obey before he can rule; and, like his Antitype, learn obedience by the things that he suffers. But the need and manner of learning are as different as the persons are different. Here we must look beyond David to learn what David's history means.

In Christ there could be no need of the *discipline* of suffering. Trial did not perfect Him in obedience, but showed Him perfect. Yet "perfected through suffering" He was, but as the "Captain of salvation," the "Author and finisher of faith," the One who goes before on and initiates the path upon which He victoriously leads His followers.* For this in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, "tempted in all things, like as we are, sin apart." (Heb. iv. 15, *Gk.*) How wondrous, how inspiring, such an example! God Himself become man to lead our feet in obedience on the path His own have trodden! In the *peculiar* sufferings of the cross He has gone beyond us, where none could follow; in all else we are called to enter into the "fellowship of His

*'Αρχηγός is the word for "Captain" and "Author" both.—(Heb. ii. 10; xii. 2.)

Samuel said, How shall I go? if Saul hear it he will kill me. And Jehovah said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to [z]sacrifice to Jehovah; and thou shalt call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee

[z] ch. 9. 12.

sufferings," and that as the way to share with Him, through His grace, the crown also: it is "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

The sufferings of David take up many chapters of the record here,—sufferings which exalt him in our thoughts much more than his after glories. We need, as knowing the deeper reality of which they speak, to search into them with special earnestness, and prayerfulness of spirit, and with the precious assurance that it is of Christ that the spirit of prophecy speaks through him: expecting ourselves, therefore, to find shining through the type the true David, God's "Beloved." The veil for us has been here, as elsewhere, really taken away: may there be not a remnant even of darkening veil over our hearts!

1. The first thing that we are called to see in David is his unique sufficiency for the hour of Israel's need. In the valley of Elah, even Jonathan, the hero of Michmash, has no help. All Israel are alike trembling and helpless in the presence of the Philistine champion, and David becomes indeed the captain of their salvation. The meaning of this we shall look at presently. Before it we are called to see him as the elect of God, qualified of the Spirit of God for the work before him. For it is never man simply that can accomplish anything: the creature was not meant to live apart from the Creator; man apart is man fallen, and in the ruin of that fall; his glory is to be nigh God, with God, and thus Christ is the only full and adequate thought of him as in the mind of God from the beginning; not an after-thought, but that to which creation from the beginning pointed.

(i.) If we have David before us, we shall not even mourn for Saul. This is what is contained in Jehovah's reproof of Samuel. It is not, of course, that he was wrong in manifesting such sorrow as the Lord Himself had over Jerusalem. It can never be aught but fellowship with Him, to weep the Redeemer's tears over human obduracy and its inevitable results. But put a Saul at his best outwardly,—and his best was but outward,—who could weep to see him displaced by a David on the throne of Israel? And much more when, as to man in general, we would lament for the crown of creation fallen from his head,—how can we do this when we see Christ assume it?

Samuel is bidden then to fill his horn with oil and go to Bethlehem, and anoint there one of the sons of Jesse to be king. The horn is the familiar type of power, as oil is of the Spirit: it is from Him who has power that the anointing comes, from Him who will make good all that it implies, and whose king must be not simply naturally but spiritually qualified,—with whom power will be, therefore, power with God, that is, spiritual power. Bethlehem we know well as the "house of bread"; and its connection with Him who is the "living bread" makes very plain its meaning. How plainly, also, for Israel was David to be the minister of sustenance for faith, as well as for God's people at all times! Christ's power for us has been manifested in more precise ministry. From the Father's house, the true "house of bread," He came, to open the stores of it, and meet earth's famine with the bounty of God. Thus Jesse the Bethlehemite witnesses in his name that "Jehovah exists." Man has sunk down low enough; hope in him rightfully there is none: the more completely that is cut off, the more surely we come to the Omnipotent and self-sufficing God, ever living, and out of whom all that is lost may be restored.

Samuel fears this errand; for Saul's character is but too well known. He is told, therefore, to take a heifer and go and sacrifice, and call Jesse to the sacrifice. Nor are we to look at this as merely a protecting veil thrown mercifully around the weakness of His servant. We have already seen such a sacrificial feast spread in connection with Saul's anointing, and know it as the sign of peace and com-

what thou shalt do; and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did what Jehovah spake; and he went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at meeting him, and said, Comest thou [y]peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice to Jehovah; sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he [z]sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And so it was, when they came, that he looked upon Eliab, and said, Surely, Jehovah's anointed is before him. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not at his appearance, nor at the [a]height of his stature, for I have rejected him: for [Jehovah seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the eyes, but Jehovah looketh on the [b]heart. And Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel; and he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen him. And Jesse made Shammah to pass by; and he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen him. And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel; and Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are these all the young men? And he said, There is one left, the [c]youngest; and behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said to Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent and brought him in. Now, he was ruddy, and withal with beautiful eyes, and [d]goodly to look upon; and Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he. And Samuel

y ch. 21. 1. 1 Kl. 2. 13.
z Ex. 19. 10.
a ch. 10. 23.
b 1 Chr. 28. 9. cf. Matt. 15. 1–20.
c cf. 1 Chr. 5. 1.
d ver. 18. cf. Song 5. 10–16.

munion between God and man. This is where Saul had failed so utterly. For him, too, all had been prepared, and he was an invited guest; but into the reality of this he had never entered. David therefore was to be now the guest, and to make up for Saul's deficiency. And the true King, when He comes, is more than David; for He is not only partaker of but spreads the feast.

Samuel goes, therefore, to Bethlehem, but the elders tremble at his coming. Things are out of course in Israel, and an uneasy conscience finds in the approach of one who walks with God a cause of distress. But Samuel quiets this, and calls them to the sacrifice, for which also he sanctifies Jesse and his sons.

They seem alone to have been present at the sacrificial meal that follows, when David is anointed. As the prophet sees the stately and striking form of Eliab, the eldest son, he imagines for the moment that this must be the one intended of the Lord; but Jehovah rebukes the thought. "Man looketh on the eyes,"—the deepest well of thought and feeling to him,—"but Jehovah looketh on the heart." Abinadab next comes before him, and then Shammah, and so seven of Jesse's sons, but all to be rejected; and there is only one remaining, away with the sheep. When he is brought, at once the voice of the Lord is heard by the prophet, "Arise, anoint him"; and David is anointed in the presence of all his brethren.

Can we gain anything from this, save that the Lord sees deeper than man, and that he chooses often for His instruments those little among men? That is true, and also important, for we are prone to forget it: but is that all that we are to learn from these details given? If not, shall we be over-bold in seeking to find meanings somewhat deeper than the surface? For here is a great type surely, and a question raised, which, if we think a little, we shall find occupies men to-day: Who is God's coming King of men? And what principle does He stand

took the horn of oil, and [e]anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And the [f]Spirit of Jehovah came upon

[e] ch. 10. 1. 1 Ki. 1. 39. 2 Sam. 2. 4.
[f] ch. 11. 6.

for or represent? Or what is the message that He brings with Him when He comes? If it is said, perhaps, It is a principle, and not a person, that men are expecting, even so it will be found that principles also wait for introduction by a person, who identifies himself with these, and is identified with them; and that men think this a valid and important subject of inquiry still. It should not be strange, then, if God have a Person in His mind who is to bring in the reign of truth and righteousness and peace which still men look for, though it be so long delayed; and that He is identified with principles of infinite importance, of which God's heart is full,—so full that it has been overflowing to communicate them, before there were ears open even to receive the report, or the time had come in which it could be fairly uttered.

Saul is yet upon the scene, and potent in his way too, we see, but doomed to be set aside. The man of the people has failed utterly under the test of God. *His* principle has been independence of God, reason such as he deems it unimpeded by revelation, the pursuit of his own ends by his own means, since God plainly cannot be trusted to secure these. Alas, all this is easily understood and confidently acted on all the world over, and will be, surely, (for at least there is no sign of change,) as long as human nature is what it is, or God does not come in to change by divine power the course of things.

Kings have failed, so that it is the glory of the present age to have either superseded or taken in hand to fetter them. Aristocracy fails, for it is only a diluted and more moderate kingship, many-headed and less easily made responsible in proportion as its power is less direct. And democracy also fails, both because the more complete it is the less really is it what it assumes to be, the more multitudinous the less available as power, the more heterogeneous. All forms of government that man has tried or that are available to him, are but the endeavor to balance contradictory self-interests, and to restrain the spirit of the wild beast ever seeking to be loose. And this is the scriptural picture: the vision of the powers of the earth which the prophet sees, and representing them until the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, is of *four wild beasts* (Dan. vii.). "Man being in honor, and understanding not, is like the beasts that perish." (Ps. xlix. 20.)

What, then, is the remedy? Nothing, plainly, but the *Son of man from heaven.* Laws, the best and the worst, fail to execute themselves, and the sons of men have no hope in them, so long as heaven is still and intervenes not. The Son of man *from heaven* is the only answer to the long unanswered question. "All judgment committed unto Him, because He is the Son of man"—perfectly intelligent and sympathetic as to man; but come to earth out of the open doors of heaven, in perfect sympathy up there, and so bringing heaven and earth into sympathetic union.

And why has the remedy been so long delayed? It was offered almost two millennia since, and was rejected! offered with amplest demonstration of its reality; rejected with the practical unanimity of all sorts and conditions of men: heaven's gift, earth's King, hung up in the face of heaven in utter scorn and face to face rejection! "He saved others," they shouted, "let Him save Himself! He trusted in God: let Him deliver Him!" And so the world has had its free field for experiments in political economy ever since. They are nearly ended now. The Son of man, thank God, is coming back again, and it will not be left any more to the world's arbitrament, whether they will have Him.

David's history shows us both these things, "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that shall follow." True history, it takes its place in the books of the "former prophets," and is prophetical, as indeed in some sense all *true* history is. But there is less of this than we are willing to admit, available to our inspection: in that day when the books shall be open we shall find the true.

The Christ? but who is the Christ? Saul, the man of the people, for faith is

(2. xvi. 14–23.) Contrasted conditions: David's ministry to Saul.

David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

[2]And the Spirit of Jehovah [g] departed from Saul, and an evil spirit [h] from Jehovah troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold, now an evil spirit from

[g] ver. 13. *cfr.* Jno. 14. 16.
[h] *cf.* 1 Kl. 22. 20–23.

passed away. Which of this long family of Jesse is worthy to succeed? Eliab is the first-born, and has a beautiful name and a stately presence. Eliab means "God"—or, "my God, is Father," and we have had the name before in the captain of Zebulon's host in the wilderness, and in very different connection as the father of that Dathan and Abiram who were conspirators with Korah against Moses. "My God is Father" is a glorious reality, which may be on the other hand most terribly abused. As Creator He is the "Father of spirits," and men are in general in that sense "His offspring." Undoubtedly also He would have all men know Him in such endeared relationship. Yet if we take our stand on the ground of creation we ignore the fall; and such was the sin of the sons of Eliab in the wilderness. Granting there be a Christ, is He to be, can He be, Head of the old creation, restorer of the old relationship within the old limits? Notice, again, that this Eliab is the first-born, David at the other end, the eighth: but this is against Eliab, though his goodly presence may appeal even to a prophet. He comes under the law of Genesis, and exemplifies the rule, "*first*, that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." (1 Cor. xv. 46.) But there is no natural Christ, nor therefore of the old creation; the eighth speaks of the new, and Eliab must give place to David.

Abinadab therefore also is foredoomed; although as the *second* son, he speaks suggestively of help or of salvation. His name too is good, and in accord with this, "my father is a liberal giver." And why, man argues, should not God, who is good and the Father of men, freely, of His mere good pleasure, remit sin? Why must the Christ be a David, an *eighth* son, owning in Himself the ruin of man, and descending to the depth of his condemnation to redeem him? But it cannot be: for sin is the dark and fundamental opposite of God, and He cannot dwell with it. To ignore is not to remove it, but to go on with it, and Abinadab can therefore be no sufficient Saviour.

Shammah is the third son of Jesse, but his name is variously interpreted. It is also differently given in Chronicles (1 Chron. ii. 13) as Shimeah, or Shimma. This last word is near akin to Shimeon (Simeon), and should have the same meaning, "hearing," or "hearkening," which is often equivalent to "obedient." But Shammah is from another root, and means "desolation." If there be no mistake in the text,—and in the next chapter it is given again as here,—this, under the number that speaks of holiness, would naturally imply that the alternative of what Eliab or Abinadab expresses must be desolating judgment; but most certainly the Christ-King could not represent such a thought as this.

No other names are given till the last is reached in David, the "beloved," the eighth, taken from the shepherd's place to fill the kingly one,—in God's thoughts still the Shepherd's. As eighth, he shows us Christ as Head of *new* creation, as we have seen: God's holiness thus expressed in the link with a new life received from Him, itself the condemnation of the old. But the King is no less the One in whom the Divine Love is shown out toward men. The "Beloved" must be indeed the King after God's own heart, and in Him of whom the type speaks here the higher and lower kingdoms come entirely together.

David is anointed, and the Spirit of Jehovah comes upon him from henceforth. He is the king designate of God, although the road to the kingdom may be yet a long one, and lead deeply down into the valley of humiliation.

(ii.) But the Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubles him. Evil as well as good has its commission from God,—not its existence, but its liberty to act, and the limits of its action. So we see in Job in early times, and in Ahab's case later; and comfort it is indeed to know

God troubleth thee. Let our lord now speak; thy servants are before thee: they shall seek out a man, a skillful [i]player on the harp; and it shall be, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him unto me. And one of the young men answered and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skillful in playing, and a [j]valiant man, and a man of war, and [k]prudent in affairs, and a [l]comely person, and Jehovah is with him. And Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass [laden with] [m]bread, and a skin of [n]wine, and a [o]kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he [p]loved him greatly, and he became his [q]armorbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me, for he hath found favor in my sight. And so it was when the [evil] spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand;

i *cf.* Ezek. 33. 32.
j ch. 17. 34, etc. *cf.* Ps. 45. 3.
k 2 Sa. 23. 1. *cf.* Jno. 7. 46.
l ver. 12.
m ch. 10. 3. *cf.* Lev. 2. 4.
n *cf.* Num. 28. 14.
o *cf.* Lev. 5. 6.
p *ctr.* ch. 18. 1.
q *cf.* ch. 31. 4, 5.

this. It is thus the wrath of man is made to praise Him, and the remainder of it He restrains. Nothing can escape from the divine government by the fact or avowal of its being evil. How should it? Thus alone can we be at peace, assured that no waves can rise higher than the footstool of His throne. The work of the evil spirit with Saul was the execution of penalty, and had it led to self-judgment would have proved mercy also. The relief granted, with its known source, was surely that goodness of God which leadeth to repentance. The character of it shows that it was the tempestuous working of Saul's own spirit that gave the evil one his opportunity,—that brought Saul within the limit ordained him of God. David's harp does not act directly upon Satan, but upon Saul. By its strange power of softening and subduing, though but temporarily, the savage temper of the rejected king, the power that assails him is driven back and shut off; for the time he is set free.

The harp of David is the sign of nature even in its lowest and inanimate forms responsive and harmonious in the hand of man. It lies with him, the highest and intelligent creature of God, to bring out and express these harmonies, to make the silence vocal. If he take not his God-given place, the capacity of nature is not known, its depths are unsounded, God's design and glory in it are obscured and misconstrued. What will be its awakening when the earth is put into the hands of the Second, the ideal Man? How will our David make all nature His harp of many strings, and lead in the anthem of praise from all creation!

But even now it is in His hand, obedient to Him alone, and so harmonious; and it is this, however little understood and realized, that alone checks and restrains the spirit of disorder and anarchy to which at times the powers ordained of God seem given up. Here, too, it acts by the power of that sweet mysterious charm of our David's melody over themselves—strangers as they may be to Him personally. The Sauls do not become Davids, but they are under the influence of David; and the mere reflection of the glory that shall at last cast out the adversary of men prevails to baffle and turn him back. How vivid is the picture here, and how completely the history justifies itself as prophecy according to, though far beyond, the Jewish conception of these books as the "former prophets."

Saul and David will nevertheless yet separate, each to his final destiny: Saul

and Saul was [r]refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

3. (xvii.) The manifestation.

[8](*a*) Now the [s]Philistines gathered their hosts together to battle, and were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to [t]Judah; and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and encamped

[r] ver. 16. *cf.* Matt. 13. 20, 21 with Hos. 6. 4.
[s] ch. 7. 7.
[t] Josh. 15. 35.

to the fatal field of Gilboa, David to the thus emptied throne, which he will raise to its highest glory.

(iii.) We now come to the time of David's manifestation as the deliverer of Israel, the one who alone can meet their need in the day of distress. As a history it is a simple but glorious lesson of faith, and of what it can achieve with no help but that of God; as a type it is a deep and instructive parable of the wondrous salvation which Christ has wrought for His people. It is such an one as by no means carries its meaning upon its face. There are difficulties in it which seem always to have hindered the satisfactory exposition of what has been generally felt must be in it by those who believe at all in any rightful allegorization of these histories. There is a mingling together of different lines of truth which easily becomes entanglement if we do not discern with care. And the remedy for this will be found, not in simply picking out what seems consistent with the meaning we have given it, and dismissing the rest as belonging to the necessary faultiness of such allegoric method, a kind of reasoning which must be the reproach and ruin of the method itself, if it is to be accepted,—but on the contrary, in a fair and full induction of all the facts. While we may not be able to see meaning everywhere, we must not turn away from unwelcome difficulties or accept what is really contradictory to the evidence as a whole.

Difficulties are plain when we look at what is the back-ground of a picture of Christ's salvation. We find a Philistine war; the adversary met by David vaunting himself a Philistine, if perhaps in fact he be something more; but indeed his Anakite descent (Josh. xi. 22) does not emerge at all in the chapter before us. If the Philistines then be what we have represented them to be, and what so much scripture combines to assure us that they are,—the ritualistic and successional world-church,—how can it be a champion of this sort that Christ is seen here to meet and slay, and from which He delivers His people? The relation of David to Saul, and much else, if explicable, have yet at least to be similarly explained, before we have the elements of a proper exposition that can rightly challenge acceptance as to what is in the mind of God before us here. One thing is certain, if there be any truth whatever in the interpretation of this whole history as far as we have now arrived, then it is not against a blank wall that we have suddenly come: there is spiritual meaning here as elsewhere; and this belief will surely be justified as the result of the examination upon which we are entering.

(*a*) The Philistines are the enemies of Saul throughout his reign, and he perishes at last in conflict with them. At this we shall be called to look another time; but that ecclesiasticism as we have seen it in them is ever hostile to the "powers that be," as represented in Saul, is evident. Always open war there is not, but it is always threatening, if not existent: for the aim of the world-church is power on earth, and if it has an intoxicating cup for its kings, and can have wanton dalliance, even thus would it cast them down and prevail against them. "Her ways are changeable," says the wise man, "that thou shouldst not know them;" but ever one purpose abides through all.

At the time we have reached, the Philistines are at open war with Israel, have invaded Judah, and are gathered together at Socoh in its territory, camping between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim, "the boundary of blood." The names here may, though not beyond question as to their meaning, give us more than a glimmer of light. Socoh we have taken elsewhere (p. 103 *n.*) to mean,

*a.* (1-11.) The man of might.

in the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, and the ravine was between them. And there went out a champion from the camp of the Philistines, named [u]Goliath of Gath, whose height was

[u] ch. 21. 10. *cf.* 2 Sam. 21. 19.

as in Lam. ii. 6, "his tabernacle," and this is named as a principal point at which they aim, while their camp is between it and Azekah, the "fence" by which He would guard it.

Now this guard is by the maintenance of the truth (as we have seen in the place referred to) that there are "two gates," "two ways," and correspondingly two ends: Christ the gate and the way to life eternal,—no other way than Christ; but then, alas! a wide gate and a broad way trodden by the many, and by which there will as surely be reached another end than this. Such is the guard which God has appointed to His sanctuary, the holy conditions which the grace of the gospel affirms, not sets aside. But Philistinism, that is, ecclesiasticism, does set them aside. It has a gate and a way which are not Christ, but which assume His name; which are broader than the true, yet narrower; and by which they penetrate between God's "tabernacle," which they claim for themselves, and the guard which He has set about it. Sacraments are made to give the "life," which He alone can give, and to sustain it. People are born of God by "water," the "Spirit" being taken for granted, and made subject to the will of man—the officiating priest. Bread and wine by an equal magic become in his hands the very flesh and blood of Christ. Here, in this Babel of unrealities which pass for realities, where the depth of the mystery is only measured by its irrationality, where faith in a sensual superstition becomes a debasing credulity,—here is indeed the entrenched camp of Philistinism, between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim, the "boundary of blood:" for so thorough is the opposition between the grace of Christ and this legal ritualism that to cross the border-line is a question of life or death: "in her," as the divine record is of Babylon, "was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev. xviii. 24.)

Saul and the army of Israel are encamped in the valley of Elah, or "the terebinth," named like the oak from its strength,—if it be not rather the oak itself. Spiritually, the "valley" is indeed the place to find the power that is manifest in life. But it is one thing to be in the position, another to have realized the blessing of it, and this, under their failed head, the Israelites have not done. In the presence of the enemy they have no strength.

A formidable champion now makes his appearance on the side of the Philistines, no doubt one of the old Anakite race, some individuals of which we are expressly told, survived at Gath, the place from which Goliath comes. Spiritually apprehended, we shall find him a giant indeed, and needing, not the might of man, but the power of God to overcome. He is the champion of the Philistines, and must therefore represent them in what is prominent in the principles for which they stand; but he is more than merely a Philistine also: a darker shadow as of vapor from the pit is cast over the picture here.

The derivation of Goliath from *galah* has the consent of lexicographers; yet corresponding to the several meanings of the verb, there have been suggested several interpretations of the name, it being hard, as far as legitimacy goes, to decide between them. In such perplexity we are entitled to take that which brings light with it rather than what conveys no meaning. That which fits the lock will prove itself as ever to be the key of the lock, to those, at least, who are clear that there is a key somewhere.

Goliath means, then, we believe, "banishment, exile;" to which the city to which he belongs adds intensity of significance. Gath means the "wine-press;" and we have before connected it with what seems its only explanation here, the

[v] six cubits and a span. And he had a helmet of [w] brass upon his head, and was clothed in a scale corselet; and the weight of the corselet was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a javelin of brass between his shoulders. And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his [x] spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and the shield-bearer went before him. And he stood and cried unto the ranks of Israel, and said unto them, Why are

v Deut. 3.11. *cf.* Dan. 3.1.
w *cf.* Deut. 28. 23. Judg. 16. 21. Rev. 1. 15. Is. 10. 5-7.
x 1 Chr. 20. 5.

pregnant saying of the Apocalypse, "He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God." "Banishment from God in His wrath," we may take as the true thought conveyed by the threatening figure of Goliath of Gath.

Now the essence of Christianity lies in this, that as the fruit of accomplished redemption we are brought nigh to God. This is what the apostle contrasts with the powerlessness of the law of Moses, for which that was set aside: "There is therefore the disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof (for the law made nothing perfect), and the bringing in of a better hope, by which *we draw nigh to God.*" (Heb. vii. 18, 19, *Gk.*) As he goes on to show (chap. ix., x.), the perfecting of the conscience so as to be able to stand in the presence of a holy God was thus what Judaism was wholly unable to effect. Of this the veil before the holiest bore constant witness. The work by which alone the conscience could be set at rest, was not yet done. But it *is now* done: "By one offering hath [Christ] *perfected forever* them that are sanctified." Hence there is rest and nearness. Only unbelief can bring in distance between the soul and God, for we are in Christ, "accepted in the Beloved" unchangeably.

But the knowledge of this is the destruction of Philistinism. The essential character of the false sacramental system is the revival of Judaism, the putting back under its shadows and into distance from God. Thus the church becomes the mediator between the unreconciled soul and God; the sacrifice and the priesthood, though with a juggle of Christian terms which are good for nothing but to conjure with, come back into the old place, but with a deadly falsehood now, such as in Judaism was not and could not be. The very essence of *that* was that it was predictive and preparatory: the old covenant was to give place to the new; there were "good things to come" that *had* not come: but this bastard Judaism claims *itself* to be that which was to come, connects itself with the precious realities of grace, only to degrade, contradict and displace them. It speaks of Christ, of His work, of His grace, ever to substitute its perversions for the truth, and in the name of the Lord rivet its chains upon the free. Here the Philistine leader becomes apparent. Goliath of Gath represents just the denial of reconciliation and nearness to God, which is so manifest in the modern Philistinism, with its Casluhite (p. 74) prate of forgiveness and grace, which is only the devil's wile to take all meaning out of such blessed words. The essence of Romanism and of all Romanizing systems lies in this, that there is no known and effectual reconciliation. You need the Church, and all the priestly train on earth,—you need the host of saints and angels up in heaven, as intercessors to bring you nigh; and with all this labor, as they quote from the funeral book of the Old Testament for their purpose, "no man knoweth whether he is worthy of favor or hatred." (Eccles. ix. 1, *Douay Version.*) The council of Trent condemned the assurance of salvation as the "vain confidence of the heretics." If you do not drop out of their hands into hell, you will certainly go to purgatory, and there pay to God the uttermost farthing for your sins.

"Exile from God because of His wrath:" this is indeed the champion of the Philistines. Heaven there is, but afar off, and with a dread uncertainty of ever reaching it. But how can the fear of this throw its shadow over the souls of the

ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I the Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose yourselves a man, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and smite me, then will we be your servants; but if I overcome and smite him, then shall ye be our servants and serve us. And the Philistine said, I [y]defy the ranks of Israel this day: give me a man, that we may fight together. And Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, and they were [z]dismayed, and exceedingly afraid.

[y] 2 Sam. 21. 20, 21. ver. 26. 2 Ki. 19. 1–4.
[z] ch. 13. 5–7.

*b.* (12-30.) The mission and words of David.

(*b*) Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons. And the man was old in the days of Saul, advanced among men. And the three eldest sons of Jesse followed Saul to the battle; and the names of the three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born, and his second, Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David was the [a]youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul. And David [b]had returned from being with Saul, to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. Now the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and took his stand [c]forty days. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to thy brethren; and carry

[a] ch. 16. 11.
[b] ch. 16. 21. ch. 18. 2.
[c] *cf.* Ex. 34. 28.

Israel of God? Alas! the type before us answers that sufficiently. Unbelief, the slighting of the word of God, the lack of any deep self-judgment, the mixture of the Church and the world: these are prominent and concurrent causes. Mid all the light that people vaunt to-day the shadows of superstition gather and their hosts stalk abroad, with the giant of Gath still champion of the host. Plain it is that it is the guilty conscience, ignorant of the power of the blood of Christ, that is the strength of all such systems. It is this that builds up priestly authority, and maintains the efficacy of sacramental "mysteries." Peace with God known, accepted consciously in the soul, the terror of wrath is gone, the giant of superstition slain, the arm of Philistia is broken: and thus we are led directly to the apprehension of the conqueror here, who is *David*, the "*Beloved*."

The height of the giant may be noted, six cubits and a span, though it is only the number which is plain as that of the full development of evil, and (we may add) unrest. He is in armor of brass, so often connected with the unyielding character of judgment; his heart is shut in with scales of brass: we are too little practised in divine symbolism to go safely further in the interpretation here. He proclaims himself emphatically "*the* Philistine," as he truly is; and defies any one in the host of Israel to contend with him. And Saul and all the host shrink back in terror.

(*b*) The history returns to David, and the memory is refreshed as to who he is. All this we are to keep in mind, and carry with us. The three eldest of his brothers follow Saul; but David has returned from Saul to his accustomed and significant occupation as shepherd of the sheep. God's king is in training, and not to be hastily detached from this.

Forty days the Philistine presents himself, morning and evening. The testing of ability to encounter him is to be fully made.

But now David, like Joseph of old—another type of royalty in Christ—is sent upon a mission. He is to seek out his brethren with food for their necessities, and see how they fare. Nor does our king yet disdain such service. He finds

these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and [d] see how thy brethren fare, and receive their token. And Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. And David rose [e] early in the morning, and left the sheep with a [f] keeper, and took, and went as Jesse had bidden him; and he came to the wagon-rampart, and the host was going forth to the battle-array, and shouted for the fight. And Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, rank against rank. And David left what he was carrying in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran into the ranks, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he spake with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words; and David heard [them].

[d] *cf.* Gen. 37. 14.

[e] ch. 29. 11. ch. 9. 26.

[f] ver. 28.

them in the ranks, going forth to the battle for which they have so little heart or competence, and sees the Philistine come forth, and hears his challenge. He is intensely and indignantly interested, and no wonder, and again and again questions the people there, "What shall be done to the man that smiteth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?" And again and again they tell him what the king will do.

If this is still to be applied typically, what is the meaning of it? What are we to say indeed of all this introduction of David into the reign of Saul and into the midst of such a conflict as has been already indicated between Israel and the Philistines? For all this has seemed, and with consistency hitherto, to speak of things that are or have been taking place in our own times and dispensation, and how could we introduce the Lord personally, as David would seem to represent Him, into scenes from which He is necessarily absent?

There is here a difficulty indeed, but not an insuperable one. Of course it is true that it would be insuperable, if we had to conceive of our Lord as being here in the body when we know that He is in heaven: this would be entirely inconsistent; yet it is said in the closing verses of the Gospel of Mark just after we have been told distinctly of His ascent into heaven and being seated on the right hand of God,—"And they went forth and preached every where, *the Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following." Thus still also, we are sure, the Lord works on; and this is no figure of speech, nor even a synonym for the Spirit's work in men: there is a difference which it is well to be clear about, and which will make what we have here also clear.

Ministry is always under the Lord: "there are differences of administrations (ministries, *marg.*), yet but one Lord;" and this the apostle says just after he had said, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5.) The two things are widely different: the *power* is of the Spirit; rule, superintendence, belong to the *Lord*.

This title, Lord, is moreover, if we may say so, His *David*, His royal, title; for He is never called king in relation to the Church, but to Israel or the nations,* while in fact the authority which He claims and exercises as "Lord" is fully royal. Thus we may rightly speak of His actings here, while He sits upon the Father's throne above; and these will show Him of course in the character of His rule, and make us realize the joy of being subject to Him. Such views of Him we may expect to realize in that which is before us.

As acting upon earth, it will be natural also, to find Him identified with and represented by the servants who serve Him, and even in their sufferings too. While we must carefully remember the limitations which types according to their

* Rev. xv. 3. should read "King of *nations*."

And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from before him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that cometh up? for to defy Israel he cometh up; and it shall be that the man who smiteth him the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his [g] daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that smiteth this Philistine, and taketh away reproach from Israel? for who is this [h] uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the [i] embattled hosts of the living God? And the people told him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done unto him that smiteth him. And Eliab, his elder brother, heard when he spake unto the men; and the anger of Eliab was kindled against David, and he said, Why hast thou come down hither? and with whom hast thou left those [j] few sheep in the wilderness? *I* know thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou camest down to see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? is there not a [k] cause? And he turned from him to another, and spake after the same manner; and the people answered him again after the former manner.

[g] *cf.* Judg. 1. 12, 13.

[h] ch. 14. 6.
[i] Ex. 12. 41. 2 Ki. 19. 21, 22.

[j] ver. 20. *cf.* Jno. 7. 5.

[k] *cf.* ver. 11.

very nature have, and take heed not to strain the application beyond these. But as to all this we must speak of it in detail as the individual types come before us, and furnish the occasion.

But it is plain therefore that the visit of David to his brethren at this time is *not* to be interpreted like that of Joseph, of the Lord's assuming flesh and coming into the world. We must rather take it as applying to what men coldly call a providential visitation. If there took place for instance at the Reformation such a deliverance as we find here from the giant of the Philistines,—if at that time the revival of a gospel which gave assurance and peace to souls delivered men from the distance and estrangement from God which Romanism maintains, and by which it effects its conquests,—then we may rightly consider this to be such a gracious visitation. The true David, the son of Jesse, (of the living and unchanging God,) surely then visited His brethren with the bread of Bethlehem, the Father's house of bread. Then was the question raised which received in result such unsatisfactory answer, "what shall be done to the man that smiteth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?"

The more this is examined, the closer will be found the application. Was not the answer too much in those days the assurance of what the *king* would do for Israel's deliverer? The failure of the Reformation—blessed work of God as there truly was in it—was it not largely in this that Saul, the secular power, and his promises were trusted in, and the princes of the earth sought to as the nursing fathers of the church? But what will they do, what have they done, for the Christ who delivered them? Alas, they sought not spiritual deliverance but temporal, though the means that could alone deliver them were in fact spiritual. The Davids were the divinely raised up champions of the truth, who descended solitary into the valley while the Sauls, yea, and Israel too, cowered in their places of shelter and looked on, to see the victory accomplished for them. In reality this victory was but one, and of One, One Christ acting in His poor followers, whom the Eliabs might insult for pride, and as leaving the few sheep to be exposed in the wilderness, while the work was being done. Yet there was a cause; and they had but to wait to see the vain seeming words become mighty deeds, the giant dead, and the Philistine host in flight!

c (31–37.) The reallization.

(c) And the words which David spake were heard, and they told them before Saul, and he laid hold of it. And David said unto Saul, [l]Let no man's heart fail because of him: thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Thou art [m]not able to go against this Philistine, to fight with him, for thou art a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said to Saul, Thy servant was feeding his father's sheep, and there came a [n]lion, and also a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I seized him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this [o]uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, because he has defied the embattled hosts of the living God. And David said, Jehovah who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine. And Saul said unto David, [p]Go, and Jehovah be with thee.

l Josh. 1. 6.

m ch. 16. 7.

n Judg.14.6. Jno. 10. 12.

o ver. 26.

p Judg.6.14.

d (38–40.) His rejection of the untested armor.

(d) And Saul clothed David with [q]his dress, and put a helmet of brass upon his head, and clothed him with a corselet. And David girded his sword upon his dress, and assayed to go; but he had not proved [them]. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not [r]proved [them.] And David put them off

q *cf.* ch. 31. 10. *ctr.* Eph. 6. 10–18.

r *cf.* 2 Cor. 10. 3–5.

(c) The words of David are reported to Saul, and though half believing only, he grasps at them. Incredulously he gazes at the stripling whose strength, such as he sees it, is little enough to be measured with that of the Philistine warrior; but David is not dismayed. He has had already his experiences of Jehovah's deliverances, and his conflict in behalf of the sheep of the flock: so the Lord trains in private those whom He brings forth at last for public use; "not a novice" is His rule for leaders; and David, young as he might be, was none. There was with him the shepherd's heart which had made him venture his life, not before the eyes of many, nor for a great result, but for a single lamb only. How could he now shrink when the issue was so vast, and the people of God were looking vainly for a deliverer?

His measure of the situation is the measure of faith. Here we find nothing of the gigantic stature of his antagonist, nor of his brazen armor, nor of his practiced soldiership: this has nothing to do with the matter; he is an uncircumcised Philistine, and has defied the embattled hosts of the living God. A very partial induction, it might be said; but for him it was ample. Faith has but to make one inquiry, Where is God in this matter? and having found this, nothing whatever on the opposite side can weigh against this.

Even Saul has to own so plain an argument. He assents, and dismisses him with a pious wish, Go, and Jehovah be with thee! That, indeed, is the whole matter: Israel is not with him, nor Saul, nor anything that flesh values, or the world has confidence in; happy is he who in the face of all this can say, "The Lord is with me! is it not enough?"

(d) But Saul shows that he does not realize this, and must at least clothe David with his own armor, that the battle may be upon more equal terms. And indeed, though not as he meant it, this would have been the case. Saul's armor was Philistine enough; and David clothed in it would have been novice enough. But he only puts it on to put it off again. He will not use what he has no ac-

him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him
[s] five smooth stones out of the [t] brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even into the pouch. And his sling was in his hand, and he drew near the Philistine.

s *cf.* Jno.6.9.
t *cf.* Ps.110.7.

*e* (41–47.) David and Jehovah.

(*e*) And the Philistine came on and approached David; and the man that bare the shield was before him. And the Philistine looked and saw David, and he [u] disdained him; for he was a youth, and ruddy, and fair of countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest unto me with staves? and the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said unto David, Come unto me, and I will give thy flesh to the bird of the heavens, and to the beast of the field. And David said unto the Philistine, [v] Thou comest unto me with sword and with spear and with javelin, and I come unto thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the battle-array of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will [w] Jehovah deliver thee up into my hand, and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee, and give the [x] carcases of the host of the Philistines this day to the bird of the heavens, and to the wild beast of the earth, that all the earth

u ver. 10. *cf.* 2 Cor.10. 10.

v Deut. 20. 1–4.

w ch. 14. 10.

x *cf.* Rev.19. 17.

quaintance with. So he goes forth, a shepherd, not a warrior, not as one with whom war is a profession, though he may fight when the flock is in peril: with his staff and sling, and five smooth stones only, out of the brook.

The means we use will largely tell the spirit we are of. In themselves of small importance, our making much of them will in fact make them much, though in a different sense from that which we imagine. Paul came not among the Corinthians "with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring the testimony of God." And in this there was not mere human weakness, but the distinct purpose that their "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." All supplements of spiritual power necessarily carnalize the effect produced; and even where God is working, the result will show itself, perhaps not till after many days. Meanwhile, as with stung fruit, the ripening may seem quicker, while in fact the proper ripeness never is attained.

David had tested his means before the battle. This let us remember, but apply it rightly too. For the word of God is that which must test everything for us, if our experience even is to be of any value. Little should we count it, comparatively, when we have unfailing wisdom of Him who sees the end from the beginning, to whom all things are naked and opened. How we should rejoice, indeed, in the unspeakable blessing of His word—His mind made known to us! As to the weapons of David, we shall see what they mean directly; but we may notice that the *five* stones already speak in the number of man in relationship with God, which accomplished, as even the person of Christ bears witness for eternity, the issue of the conflict before us is not doubtful.

(*e*) The combatants now approach to the encounter, and the spirit of each is manifest. With David there is confident assurance, but it is in Jehovah, in whose name he acts, and who is with him, meaning to show Himself as the living God to all the earth, and to make Israel know that He saves neither by sword nor spear, but the issue of the battle is in His hand alone. So, indeed, has God wrought, and for such a purpose, in those great crises of human history in which His hand has been stretched out to break the power of the enemy and deliver men out of his grasp. But above all, when the deliverance has been from

may know that the [y]God of Israel exists; and that all this congregation may know that Jehovah saveth not by sword and by spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and he hath given you into our hand.

[f] (48–54.) The victory.

(*f*) And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted and ran toward the ranks to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand into his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. And David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him: and there was [z]no sword in the hand of David. And David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it from its sheath, and slew him, and [a]cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their mighty man was dead, they [b]fled. And the men of Israel and Judah arose, and shouted, and [c]pursued the

[y] Josh. 4.24. 2 Chr. 20.15.

[z] 2 Sam. 23. 21. ch. 21. 9.

[a] ch. 31. 8. *cf.* Heb. 2. 14.

[b] Judg. 7.21.

[c] 2 Sam. 22. 38.

spiritual oppression and darkness, and the result of it the bringing of souls into the joy and peace of the gospel, how has God declared His being and name, and how clearly has victory been the result not of human effort or carnal means, but His handiwork alone!

(*f*) But we must now consider more particularly the means of the giant's overthrow. This smooth stone from the brook, what is it? may we expect to find a definite meaning in it? It has evidently a most important place in the history: ought it not to have as much in the interpretation, if this is to be consistent, so as to have upon it the stamp of truth?

A smooth stone from the brook is one which has been fashioned by the stream of running (which in Scripture is the same as living) water; and this last we know as constantly a figure of the Spirit of God. Here should be a beginning of understanding for us.

Then a *stone* shaped by the Spirit of God would naturally make us think of the "*living* stones" of which Peter speaks, expanding for us the significance of his own name; stones built up into the spiritual house which is built upon the foundation of living stone, which is Christ Jesus. As stones, they are true and divine material for the house of God in contrast with Babel's bricks of human manufacture (Gen. xi), and are types of permanence and solidity. God's living stones will abide in their God-given place forever, a sanctuary of praise that will never be taken down or cease to manifest His glory eternally.

If, then, we simply follow Scripture in interpreting Scripture, how well may this smooth stone from the brook in our David's hand destroy the dread shadow of wrath and alienation from God which the giant of Gath expresses! The stone speaks of divine work and a divine position, of settled nearness to God and indwelling glory! What a salvation indeed is this, and what a triumph over all the power of the enemy! The giant falls, and is slain with his own sword; for by death Christ has destroyed him that had the power of death (Heb. ii. 14): here the work of the cross finds its place in this grand type; what victory can be accomplished without it? and how plain that every victory of this kind is really His, who alone could handle such a weapon!

At once the Philistines flee, and Israel has only to pursue a defeated foe. As has been said, the whole power of ecclesiasticism is broken for those who have seen the giant fallen. The apprehension of the true Church, and of our individual place in it, in abiding nearness to and joy in God, of necessity overthrows the would-be mediation of the false church with all its hosts of empty

Philistines until thou come to the ravine and to the gate of Ekron; and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way of Shaaraim, even as far as Gath, and as far as Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they [d] spoiled their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to [e] Jerusalem, and he put his armor in his tent.

The Breach between Saul and David. 1. (xvii. 55-xviii. 5.)

[d] 2 Kings 7 7, 8.

[e] 2 Sam. 5 4-9.

(XVII. 55-XIX. 17.)

The period of favor, and apparent harmony.

2. [1]And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, [f] whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As

[f] *cf.* ch. 16. 19-23.

intercessors. The imposing array becomes at once but a routed rabble, who proclaim in their very creed their ignorance of God and of His Christ. Ominous now are the names of the places where the Philistine wounded fall,—Shaaraim, "two gates!"* Gath, the "wine-press" of wrath; Ekron, "rooting out." Not a name here but has its tale to tell; the picture is complete even in its minutest features. And how much would the people of God learn of His mind, if they would but set themselves in faith to understand these histories as "prophetic scriptures" (Rom. xvi. 26. *Greek.*) given by Him who sees the end from the beginning, for our instruction and admonition, to whom all the ages are appointed to minister, but who alas, so little heed the wondrous grace of God!

In all this part we can see, whether Christ *personally* be before us or not, how it is He Himself governs all. If He be pleased to identify Himself with human instruments, yet they are only this,—the force, the power, is in Christ alone. Only so far as they hide themselves in Him can they fill their place or do their work at all. No wonder therefore if, just in the crises of the history, as here in the victory over Goliath, the Sun break through all veils, and the direct glory of the Lord shine on us. We think of the way of the Cross as the true valley of Elah, of him that had the power of death in the Philistine giant, of the resurrection as that which, enabling God to be with us, is the foundation of the Church itself, and the defeat of the foe, putting the sword of death into the Champion's hand for death's destruction. If we pursue this further we soon find the veil-cloud closing in again: yet here is the hiding of its power; and the connection with after events of human history only manifests this power as henceforth the ruling factor in the history of man. It is His own voice saying, as of old, "And behold, I am ever with you," and the cloud is but His chariot,—the Christ once humbled is now seen as throned.

2. Between the true king thus manifested and the one rejected of God there cannot be, for a moment, any true fellowship. The nearer they are brought together the more must the essential opposition between them be manifest. On the side of Saul it ripens into enmity which soon breaks through all disguise, and David is obliged to flee from the man to whom he has rendered such important assistance, a wanderer and an outlaw. It is only one form of that spirit which has been in the world since the day of Cain, of which the cross was the full, ripe fruit; and which, under whatever partial disguises in professedly Christian lands, exists to-day the same as ever. Saul may sacrifice to Jehovah, and fill the role of an Israelitish king; but a true Israelite, a "prince with God," he cannot be. Christian governments to-day there are not, though they make their bow to Christianity and bring their offering: the true King and His representatives can never be in heart welcomed by them, though they may appreciate certain advantages received, and rejoice in some deliverances accomplished for them. These things we shall be called to consider in the fruitful history that lies before us.

(i.) At first there is naturally a period of favor and acceptance. There has

* See page 103, notes.

thy soul liveth, O king, I do not know. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son this young man is. And when David returned from the smiting of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the Philistine's head in his hand. And Saul said unto him, Whose son art thou, youth? And David said, I am the son of thy servant [g]Jesse the Bethlehemite. And it came to pass when he had ended speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was [h]knit unto the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him in that day, and suffered him [i]no more to return to his father's house. And Jonathan and David made a [j]covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan [k]stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it unto David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to

g Ru. 4. 22.
h ch. 20. 17. cf. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.
i ch. 17. 15.
j ch. 20. 16.
k cf. Phil. 3. 7, 8.

been undoubtedly a great deliverance, and there is on every side the joy of it. David is in honor with Saul himself. Such a time was realized when the gospel gained its great victories in Reformation times. The papal yoke was broken from the neck of kings and governments; and it seemed as if they must joyfully bow their necks to Christ's yoke. Nations accepted evangelical creeds, and kings became protectors of the Church. It was not a sign for good, in reality; and yet it was quite natural to accept it as such. In fact, the Churches, in their zeal against popery and ill-considered enthusiasm over the favor of kings, assumed really the position with which the Philistine had reproached Israel, of being "servants to Saul." Nor does Romanism fail still to fling the taunt in the face of Protestantism.

From the beginning, however, Saul shows how little David has been to him. Before the battle in the valley of Elah he had, as we know, been already debtor to him. His harp had broken the power of the evil one again and again, and set him free; and Saul, it was even said, had "loved him greatly." But there is nothing, perhaps, of more various quality than love; and nothing that more takes its color from the subject of it. What need the apostle feels to define for Christians what true love is! We "love" those who please our tastes,— perhaps gratify our mere selfishness; and this love can turn into thorough enmity as soon as self has to be yielded up to it in any wise. True love, on the other hand, "seeketh not her own": it is the very spirit of self-sacrifice; of such love Saul was not capable.

It is not intimated that he has forgotten David: he asks whose son he is. He had known that also, but it had slipped away from him, because he had valued him for his services merely, never had that personal interest in him which makes all belonging to one an interest. In such a case, how easy to forget!

If we think of the spiritual significance, Jesse's name is full of meaning. The "living God" is indeed the One whom the princes of the earth willingly forget, and the relationship of Christ to Him fades quickly out of remembrance. Hence Christianity becomes for them, at the best, a lifeless orthodoxy; and the captain of the host knows nothing aright of the infinitely greater "Captain of salvation."

But the soul of Jonathan is at once knit to the soul of David. Here is a harmony of soul with soul, which of necessity brings such together; and for David Jonathan strips himself,—a type of true and devoted love. Saul may give David an honorable place,— advancing, of course, his own interests thereby; but Jonathan abases self to exalt him. "He must increase, but I must decrease," declares in the words of the Baptist the law which is written in the heart, according to the terms of the New Testament.

his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him: he behaved himself [l]wisely, and Saul set him over the men of war: and he was accepted in the sight of [m]all the people, and in the sight of Saul's servants.

2. (xviii. 6–16.) Saul's jealousy aroused: the breach begun.

2 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returning from the smiting of the Philistines, that the [n]women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with rejoicing, and with triangles. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, [o]Saul hath smitten his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and this saying was evil in his eyes; and he said, They have given David his ten thousands, and to me they have given the thousands, and what remaineth for him but the [p]kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day forward. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the [q]evil spirit from God came suddenly upon Saul, and he prophesied* in the midst of the house, and David was playing with his hand, as at other times; and a javelin was in Saul's hand. And Saul threw the javelin, and said, I will [r]smite David even to the wall. And David gat him out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because Jehovah was with him, and had departed from Saul. And Saul [s]removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David prospered in all

[l] vers. 15, 30.
[m] ver. 16. *cf.* Mark 12. 37.
[n] *cf.* Ex. 15. 20, 21. Ju. ch. 5. Ps. 68. 25.
[o] ch. 21. 11. ch. 29. 5. *cf.* 1 Cor. 3. 3–9.
[p] *cf.* ch. 13. 14.
[q] ch. 16. 23.
[r] ch. 19. 10.
[s] *cfr.* ch. 16. 21.

* Erdmann and others translate "raved." The word is the identical one for prophesying, not necessarily as prediction of future events, but as speaking by inspiration, whether from God, or, as here, from an evil spirit.

Typically, the ordination by God of the secular power, which Jonathan represents, has, as we know, respect to Christ: in its very failure bearing witness of Him who must needs to come to fill aright the throne on earth; stripping itself, as it were, to invest Him with royal garments. With Him is its covenant; and it perishes to make way for Him.

Meanwhile our David consents still to the servant's place; and in that place serves wonderfully, even to the blessing and glory of the kings of the earth; doing battle for them, also in behalf of the people dear to Him, with whom He is ever "accepted," sometimes also in the sight of Saul's servants, but only as a "man of war."

(ii.) Saul's favor could not last long. His jealousy is awakened by the songs of the women, who exalt David in his deeds above himself. It was only the truth artlessly spoken, which is not because of that more agreeable to a jealous mind. What can he have more, except the kingdom? he argues. The anger of his soul exposes him once more to the attacks of the evil spirit, which for a while seem to have ceased, and now David's harp has lost its power: Saul casts the javelin that was in his hand to smite him to the wall, and twice David escapes out of his presence. Then fear comes upon Saul: he realizes that Jehovah is with David, and not with himself, and he gives him an inferior place away from him; but thus he is brought still more before the people, and into favor and acceptance with them: and Saul fears the more.

All this may be difficult to interpret with exactness. The general thought it is not hard to see,—the jealousy which in fact the secular power has manifested of the spiritual, to which it nevertheless owes a great deliverance. It is not

his ways, and Jehovah was with him; and when Saul saw how very prosperous he was, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah [t]loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

3. (xviii. 17–30.) David's marriage.

[3] And Saul said unto David, Behold, my elder [u]daughter Merab, I will give her to thee to wife; only be valiant for me, and fight Jehovah's battles: and Saul said, Let not [v]my hand be on him, but let the Philistines' hand be on him. And David said unto Saul, [w]Who am I? and what is my life, my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king? But it came to pass, at the time when Saul's daughter Merab should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel, the Meholathite, to wife. And Michal,

*t cf.* ch. 10. 24. 1 Chr. 11. 1, 2.

*u* ch. 17. 25.

*v cf.* Gen. 37. 27. *cf.* 2 Sam. 11. 15. ver. 25.

*w* ch. 9. 21. 2 Sam. 7. 18.

within our aim to enter into the history, for instance, of the Reformation churches, which would prove this. Escaped from ecclesiastical control, the states which owed this to the gospel of Christ have speedily enough exhibited their jealousy of Christ's word, and even in moments of insanity launched the javelin against those who, first of all, would obey Him. The annals of dissent from nationalism and subservience to the state are full of evidence of this, which all who care may find. After which has come uneasy toleration, and perhaps distant patronage, designed to promote state-interests, but at bottom leaving still the breach unhealed. Alas, to heal this, the world must cease to be the world, as Scripture characterizes it, by its passions and its lusts away from God.

(iii.) The next section has much greater difficulties. The first of these is: are we, or not, to see in David's marriage to a daughter of Saul a lesson of failure? Is the type a type of that? That Saul meant it for evil is plainly stated, though the Lord did not suffer what he hoped to come to pass; but the after-history shows but little good. She is said to have "loved" David, and we find her shielding him shortly after from Saul; but her justification of herself in that matter is not calculated to raise her in one's estimation. Her words might well leave Saul to conceive that there would be no obstacle found on her part to her union with another man; nor does anything that we hear of her lead us to imagine it. She is restored by Abner to David after years of dwelling with Phaltiel, only to be seen again mocking the king of Israel for his self-abasement before the ark, and to be heard of as under penalty for this for the rest of her life. On David's part we do not realize special failure, it is true; but neither do we find God's blessing on him in it: the history, with one exception, is one of evil and not of good. This being so, we naturally connect it, even as a type, with evil, and not with good.

And this again would prevent us seeing in it a type of the Lord Himself, though it must be assuredly of that or those linked with Him and representing Him in the time of His absence now; and here, alas, even abundant failure is readily conceivable.

Saul's promise had been given before the victory to make a conqueror of the giant his son-in-law; but that seemed to be forgotten. He renews it only in his enmity against David, to bring about his death at the hands of the Philistines. Even so, his offer of Merab again falls through, and she is given to Adriel the Meholathite, a chapter in history with a terrible ending.

Merab, we know, means "increase," and speaks not of what is spiritual, but of temporal prosperity, which is indeed much of the strength of the Sauls, the kings of the earth, wherever found. But this could not be united with our David, or with those standing for Him in the day of His rejection. Yet Adriel, to whom she is given, has a name which sounds well, signifying "the flock of God"; yet here we should expect as a type a woman and not a man. Christ is

Saul's daughter, loved David; and they told Saul, and the thing was right in his eyes. And Saul said, I will give her unto him, that she may be a [x]snare unto him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be upon him. And Saul said unto David the second time, Thou shalt now be my son-in-law. And Saul commanded his servants, Speak ye to David secretly, saying, Behold, the king delighteth in thee, and all his servants love thee; and now be the king's son-in-law. And the servants of Saul spake these words in David's ears; and David said, Is it a light thing in your eyes to be the king's son-in-law, and I a poor man, and lightly esteemed? And Saul's servants told him, saying, After this manner did David speak. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say unto David, The king careth not for dowry, but for a [y]hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies: for Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And his servants told David these words, and the thing was right in David's eyes to be the king's son-in-law. And the days were not expired, when David arose and went, he

[x] *cf.* Judges 16. 5, etc. ch. 19. 17.

[y] ver. 17. 2 Sam. 12. 9.

the Man; the Church espoused to Him the woman: even "Babylon the great" is that. If then the flock of God be represented here (and the meaning of the name is precise), there must be significance in this also: the woman stands for dependence, the man for independence; and independent indeed must that be which can receive its Merab from the kings of the earth, when she is taken also from the true David to be bestowed upon it.

To this we can add that Adriel is a Meholathite; and *meholah* signifies a "circling dance." So that all seems to agree in conveying the thought of a church which, without being Philistine, has become separate in interest from and out of fellowship with a rejected Christ; and such as a Saul can afford to honor. Adriel is under no obligation to fight the Lord's battles, to obtain the king's daughter.

But Saul has another daughter, and for her he can yet make his bargain with David. There is much difficulty, however, as to what Michal stands for, or even the meaning of her name. Lexicographers in general give it that of "brook," from 2 Sam. xvii. 20. But that is the only occurrence, and the meaning is only gathered from the context. According to its apparent derivation it might mean "what holds," and then the word "water" following be needful to explain the application. A word, *michla*, near akin, means "sheepfold," and such a significance for Michal would seem more appropriate to the type than any: for many a David has been seduced by such an offer of protection for the sheep of Christ, which many a Saul has made and sought to fulfill. But a fold of this kind would be but a snare, and its connection with David loose enough in result. The ambiguity of Michal's name, which might be, interrogatively, "who can hold?" would thus have its appropriateness also.

Nor need this contradict the force or application of the word as given before, there vaguer and more general, here specific. The names of Scripture, as we have seen elsewhere, have often a fullness and sometimes an ambiguity of meaning that adds to their force. Here to "hold" and to "measure" are meanings near akin. To "hold" God's sheep in the sense intended is in fact to "measure" them. Yet all this as to the interpretation of Michal is only put forth as suggestion; the difficulty of reading it consistently throughout is great, and this makes against it: verisimilitude is the only law of verification for a type.

That this offer necessitates another encounter with the Philistines is, however, quite congruous with this meaning, and scarcely needs to be explained. During

and his men, and smote of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and delivered them in full to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and [z]knew that Jehovah was with David; and Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and Saul became David's enemy continually. And the princes of the Philistines went forth; and it was so, as often as they set forth, that David prospered more than all Saul's servants: and his name was greatly esteemed.

z ch. 23. 17. ch. 24. 20.

4.(xix.1-17.) The failure of this also.

[4]And Saul spake unto Jonathan his son and to all his servants, about putting David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David: and Jonathan [a]told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to put thee to death. Now, therefore, take heed to thyself, I pray thee, in the morning, and abide in a secret place and hide thyself. And I will [b]go out and stand beside my father, in the field where thou art, and I will speak to my father of thee; and what I see I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake well of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, but what he hath done to thee hath been very good. For he put his [c]life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought by him a great deliverance for all Israel: thou sawest it and didst rejoice; why then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to put David without cause to death? And Saul [d]hearkened to the voice of Jonathan; and Saul sware, As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

a ch. 20. 12, 13, 35–41.

b ch. 20. 24, 28, 29.

c ch. 17. 40–50.

d *cf.* ch. 24. 16–22. ch. 26. 21.

And there was [e]war again: and David went out and fought against the Philistines, and smote them with [f]great slaughter; and they fled from him. And an evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul; and he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand; and David was [g]playing with the hand. And Saul sought to smite David with the javelin, even to the wall; but he broke away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall. And David fled, and escaped that night.

e ch. 23. 1.

f ch. 17. 52. etc.

g ch. 18. 11. ch. 20. 32.

all these wars, moreover, David must be ever the great conqueror. The gospel and those who are identified with it are alone able effectually to deal with modern Philistinism; and in this way, in a wider circle than that of true disciples David's name is "much set by."

(iv.) All this fails as a means of conciliation; and victories over the Philistines only inflame the king's anger. He is soon openly plotting David's death; though this is for the time stopped by the intercession of Jonathan, the true friend of both. Saul swears by Jehovah, the most solemn oath possible, that David shall not die; and again they are brought together. But a new victory over the Philis-

And Saul sent [h]messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning; and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain. And Michal [i]let David down through the window; and he went, and fled, and escaped. And Michal took the teraphim, and laid it in the bed, and put the net of goats' [hair] at its head, and covered it with the coverlet. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is [j]sick. And Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, Bring him up unto me in the bed, that I may slay him. And the messengers came, and behold, the teraphim in the bed, and the net of goats' [hair] at its head. And Saul said to Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, and he is escaped? And Michal said unto Saul, He said unto me, Let me go: [k]why should I kill thee?

h Ps. 59. Title.

i Acts 9. 25.

j *cf.* Josh. 2. 3–6. 2 Sam. 17. 19.

k *cf.* vers. 11, 15. *ctr.* John 18. 3–5.

Jehovah manifests Himself for David, and priest and oracle unite themselves with him.

1. (xix. 18–24.) The power over Saul.

(XIX.18-XXII.)

3. [l]And David fled and escaped, and came to [l]Samuel, to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done unto him; and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth at Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David; but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying,

l ch. 15. 34, 35. ch. 16. 13.

tines arouses Saul once more, and the old scenes are repeated. David flees again from the murderous hand of Saul, and only escapes by the strategy of Michal, who deceives Saul's messengers with an image in the bed. But David is now a wanderer, and a new phase of his history is that which is for long to occupy us.

3. Cast out by man, David is the more cast upon God, who appears for him, and identifies Himself with him more and more, as Saul also ripens into more open defiance of God. By the slaughter of the priests and the escape of Abiathar, the means of consulting the divine oracle come into David's hands, of which he avails himself at Keilah and elsewhere. This time is one in which, as we know, many of his psalms were conceived and uttered, the fruit of exercise and manifold experiences, both of himself and of the goodness of God toward him,—a time of truest sanctification and blessing therefore, the spiritual education of the King that is to be.* Here, typically, we shall assuredly find, with outshinings of the glory of Christ Himself, much of the spiritual history of those who have stood most truly for Him, in the day of His rejection: not a dispensational view probably, or the picture of any special period, but of what has been realized in the lives of those in all periods of Christianity faithful to the word of the Lord. And here, no doubt, the lessons will be best learned by those who have most the path to tread.

(i.) At the first step upon it the power which is over Saul is plainly evidenced. David flees, naturally enough, in the first place to Samuel, by whom he had been anointed, and who stood forth before all men's eyes in those days as, by his nearness to God, apart from all other men. Samuel, if any, had power to stand against Saul himself, and that he would do it there could be no question. Few characters in all Scripture equal Samuel's for that consistent walk with God, and ability to act for Him, which beget confidence on the part of others. David therefore makes known to Samuel all that Saul has done; and Samuel comes

* We shall not, however, attempt here to fit the psalms to the history. This needs an examination of the psalms themselves, which could not be given in this place. We must reserve it till, the Lord willing, we come to these.

and Samuel standing [as] set over them, the [m] Spirit of God came upon Saul's messengers, and they also prophesied. And it was told Saul, and he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again, the third time, and they also prophesied. Then went he also to Ramah, and came as far as the great cistern that is at Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither, to Naioth at Ramah, and the Spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came

[m] ch. 10. 6, 10. cf. Rev. 2. 5.

with him to dwell at Naioth,* the collected "dwellings" of the prophets, who gathered around Samuel. The word is a plural, and signifies both "dwellings" and "pastures," suiting well therefore that thought of a prophetic "school" with which tradition ekes out the scanty notices of Scripture. Here we might imagine David's language to be what he generalizes in the psalm as to all those that trust in God: "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." (Ps. xxxi. 20.) Yet hence he is driven, to realize a better "hiding-place" in God Himself. (Ps. xxxii. 7.) To his retreat Saul pursues him: after sending three times in vain his messengers, he follows them himself. But upon all alike the Spirit of God comes, subjecting them perforce to itself, so that they prophesy; and upon Saul before he has even reached the place, and with effect deeper and more lasting,—reviving the saying which had earlier gone forth about him, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

And how must Saul's mind also have gone back to those earlier days, before yet the Spirit had been grieved away from him, and when all the possibilities of the divine call to the throne of Israel were opening before him! What tender recollections to touch the heart with, and to bring, if it might be, this wanderer to himself! Then, how vain to contend with power such as this! Who ever hardened himself against God and prospered? On the other hand, what an assurance of One ready still to receive,—who would, even by force if it were possible, put Saul among the prophets! Yet against all this, as we know, Saul did harden himself, and became necessarily more evil in proportion to the grace resisted, according to the constant and inevitable law of cause and effect.

For David himself what an assurance of the eternal arms, though invisible, that were around him! Yet he goes forth, for deeper experiences of God's living care, in the rough scenes beyond, than he could find even in that sheltered retreat, and in that atmosphere thrilling with His voice. Yet here we see for a moment, in a vivid picture, how brightly the spiritual life might manifest itself in Israel in a time such as this, and how near God drew even then to His people that sought Him. Is it too much to say, with the apostle's words in view (1 Cor. xiv.), that now, when Moses' desire that "all the Lord's people were prophets" has found its practicability of accomplishment in the fulfillment of its other part,—"that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them,"—there should be in every Christian assembly a display of divine power as great as this, and a glory of the divine presence fuller and nearer far? Oh that it were indeed so! Here we find that even then there were many more prophets than those whose voices have come down to us. Now that "ye may *all* prophesy" is limited only by the unbelief that cannot understand this, or the coldness of heart that has no response to it. Alas for the privileges unenjoyed that will one day rise up against us! Rather let us take now the reproach, and find in the grace of our God the available remedy.

The typical meaning is not so hard to understand, as the application may seem slight and trivial. But the secular power has, in fact, in its relation to the divine

* Or, as in the Kethib (the "written" text), Nevaloth.

to Naioth in Ramah. And he too stripped off his garments, and he too prophesied before Samuel, and prostrated himself naked all that day, and all that night. Wherefore they say, [n]Is Saul also among the prophets? n ch. 10. 11, 12.

2. (xx.) The breach confirmed, and the separation of friends.

[2]And David fled from Naioth at Ramah, and came and said before [o]Jonathan, What have I done? what is my iniquity? and what my sin before thy father, that he is seeking my life? And he said unto him, Far be it: thou shalt not die. Behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but he will show it unto me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. But David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found favor in thine eyes, and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved; but truly, as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a [p]step between me and death. And Jonathan said unto David, Whatever thy soul may say, I will even do it for thee. And David said to Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the [q]new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat; but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening. If thy father should really miss me, then thou shalt say, David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly [r]sacrifice there for all the family. If he say thus, It is well, then thy servant shall have peace; but if he be very angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him. Deal kindly, then, with thy servant, for thou hast brought thy servant into a [s]covenant of Jehovah with thee; but if there be iniquity in me, kill me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father? And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I really knew that evil was determined to come on thee by my father, would I not tell it thee? And David said unto Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly? And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the [t]field. And they went out both of them into the field. And Jonathan said unto David, Let Jehovah the God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow [or] the next day, and behold, it is good to

o ch. 19. 2.

p ch. 18. 11.

q Nu. 10. 10. Nu. 28. 11. 2 Ki. 4. 23. Amos 8. 5.

r ch. 16 2.

s ch. 18. 3.

t ch. 19. 3.

King, such different phases. It can prophesy falsely under evil inspiration, or truly under that which is of God: it can favor for the moment the true King and those identified with Him, or bitterly persecute them. All this is perfectly plain, — so plain we need not dwell upon it. It can even, under the spiritual impulse, strip itself of its royal robes, and prostrate itself as the feeble creature it is, in the dust before God. But its general course is little affected by this: the world abides still the world: it may be Protestant,— not Romanist; Israelite,— not Philistine; but still it is the world, and the man in honor in it is not the man after God's heart, but the people's,— away from God.

(ii.) A more sorrowful scene still is that which follows. The breach with Saul is realized to be no temporary one, and its effect is found in the separation of

David, if I then send not to thee and show thee,—let Jehovah do so, and much more to Jonathan! If it be good to my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, and thou shalt go in peace: and Jehovah be with thee as he has been with my father. And thou shalt not only, while I live, show me the [u] kindness of Jehovah, that I die not, but thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever, no, not when Jehovah shall have cut off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made [a [v] covenant] with the house of David, [saying,] Let Jehovah even require it from the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he [w] loved his own soul.

And Jonathan said unto him, To-morrow is the new moon, and thou wilt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And on the third day thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place [x] where thou didst hide thyself when the work was in hand, and abide by the stone of Ezel. And I will shoot three arrows on the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. And behold, I will send a lad, [saying,] Go, and find the arrows. [y] If I expressly say to the lad, Behold the arrows are this side of thee, take them, then come, for there is peace to thee, and nought [else], as Jehovah liveth. But if I say unto the young man thus, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee, go thy way, for Jehovah hath sent thee away. And as [touching] the matter that we have spoken of, I and thou, behold, Jehovah be between me and thee forever.

So David hid himself in the field, and when the new moon was come, the king sat down to eat meat. And the king sat upon his seat as at other times, even on a seat by the wall, and Jonathan arose that Abner might sit by Saul's side, and David's seat was empty. But Saul spake nothing that day, for he said, Something hath befallen him: he is not [z] clean; surely, he is not clean. And it came to pass the next day after the new moon, the second [day], that David's place was empty; and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Why cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, either yesterday or to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave

u 2 Sam. 9. 3.

v ch. 18. 3. ch. 23. 18. 2 Sam. 21. 7.

w ch. 18. 1.

x ch. 19. 2.

y *cf.* ch. 14. 9, 10 with ver. 12.

z Lev. 7. 20, 21. Lev. 15. 1, 2. *cf.* ch. 14. 38, 39.

those who are brethren. The long account which fills a chapter of our Bibles shows how the Spirit of God would emphasize this. The fact is a very familiar one indeed: the sorrow of it every heart taught of God must realize.

Jonathan and David part! But what then does Jonathan stand for in this connection? Clearly if in the first place he represent, as we believe, that ordination of God by which the "powers that be" become the objects of recognition on the part of Christians, Jonathan would represent here those who make this recognition govern them in their position ecclesiastically. They love David, but they cling to Saul. They interpret God's sanction of the civil power so as to

of me [to go] to Bethlehem; and he said, Let me go, I pray thee, for our family have a sacrifice in the city, and my brother he hath commanded me [to be there]; and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, that I may see my brethren. Therefore he is not come to the king's table.

And the [a]anger of Saul was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do I not know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thy shame, and to the shame of thy mother's nakedness? for as long as the son of Jesse [b]liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he is doomed to die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father and said unto him, Why should he be put to death? what hath he done? And Saul [c]cast the javelin at him, to smite him, and Jonathan knew that his father had determined to put David to death. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no meat the second day of the new moon: for he was [d]grieved for David that his father had done him shame.

And it came to pass in the [e]morning that Jonathan went out into the field, at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run now, and find the arrows that I shoot. As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the lad came to the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan called after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. And the lad knew not anything: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said unto him, Go and carry them to the city. The lad went, and David arose from the south side, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times; and they kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David [f]exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, Jeho-

a ch. 19. 17.

b ch. 19. 1. *cf.* Mt. 21. 38.

c ch. 19. 10.

d *cf.* Lk. 23. 50, 51.

e vers. 19–22.

f *cf.* Gen. 42. 24. Gen. 43. 30. Gen. 45. 1, 2, 15 with 1 Jno. 4. 19.

make it in some sense a spiritual power as well. They use Jewish analogies to illustrate Christian relationships, and make a theocracy out of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. The state-church Protestantism developed many Jonathans, whose hearts and consciences were in opposition to one another; and where the state church survives such will still be found.

Jonathan is forced to realize for himself the enmity of Saul against David,—not a momentary paroxysm of madness, but a malignant spirit, which would once more sacrifice Jonathan himself for thwarting its stubborn pride. He has to acquiesce in David's departure, for the arrow does not fall within the limit of safety to him. So they part: Jonathan to place and honor, and then the fatal conflict at Gilboa; David, through present suffering and rejection, to a throne.

vah be [g]between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

3. (xxi. 1-9.) The holy things by which faith is recruited.

3 And David came to Nob to Ahimelech the [h]priest; and Ahimelech [i]trembled at meeting David, and said unto him, Why art thou [j]alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The [k]king charged me with a matter, and said unto me, Let no man know aught of the business upon which I send thee, and with which I have charged thee; and I have directed the young men to such and such a place. And now, what is there under thy hand? give me in my hand five loaves, or what may be found. And the priest answered David and said, There is no common bread under my hand, but there is [l]holy bread; if the young men have [m]kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, [Nay,] but women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy; and it is in a manner common, yea, even when it is sanctified that day in the vessel. And the

[g] vers. 15, 16.
[h] ch. 22. 20-23.
[i] ch. 16. 4.
[j] ch. 18. 5.
[k] *cf.* ch. 19. 14.
[l] Lev. 24. 5-9. *cf.* Mt. 12. 3, 4.
[m] Lev. 15. 16. Lev. 22. 14.

The appointed path for us also is found here: "if we suffer we shall also reign with Him."

(iii.) The next incident in David's life is noticed in each of the synoptic gospels, as used by the Lord to illustrate and enforce His affirmation that "the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." (Luke vi. 5.) Here David is lord of the shew-bread, which, though holy according to the law, is, under the circumstances, common; and which he not only takes, but gives to those that are with him.* Everything was in ruin in Israel. Since the captivity of the ark in the Philistines' land, it had never returned to the sanctuary, which had been itself shifted from place to place, till now it was at Nob, not even a priestly city according to the original designation of these by lot in Joshua's time, and from which it was soon to be again violently dislodged. The absence of the ark involved that of the mercy-seat or "propitiatory" which covered it, and this again complete inability to carry out the ordinance of the day of atonement, all-important as this was for Israel's acceptance with God. Nor does there seem to have been any realization of the greatness of their loss: "we inquired not at it"—the ark—says David himself, "in the days of Saul." (1 Chron. xiii. 3.) Yet it was the throne of the Lord, where was His dwelling-place between the cherubim.

God had indeed raised up Samuel as an extraordinary link between the people and Himself. But Samuel too had been finally rejected by the people, as we have seen. Nor had Saul, the people's choice, though permitted to them by God, ever stood even in Samuel's place. He in turn having been rejected, David had become the anointed of the Lord; and now David was fleeing from the face of Saul, an outcast and a wanderer. In this state of things, what virtue could remain for them in the old institutions? Upon David alone everything now depended, and thus we can understand his words, enigma as they are still to most interpreters, "it"—the shew-bread—"is in a manner common; yea, even when it is sanctified that day in the vessel."† David says "in a *manner* common," because

* In the history these are not spoken of except by David himself, and where he is bent upon misleading the high priest; but it does not therefore follow that this was part of the deceit, and the Lord's assurance is warrant enough for every Christian.

† This has been also very variously rendered by translators and commentators in most strained and awkward fashion. "It is a hurried, excited sentence," says the American editor of Lange, "almost utterly obscure." Rather, it has been obscured by lack of intelligence on the part of the interpreter.

priest gave him holy [bread], for there was no bread but the shew-bread, which was taken from before Jehovah, to put hot bread [there] in the day that it was taken away. And a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, [n]detained before Jehovah; and his name was Doeg the [o]Edomite, the chief of the shepherds that Saul had. And David said unto Ahimelech, And

n cf. Matt. 15. 8.
o ch. 22. 9.

after all God had not done with these institutions, which soon were to be revivified, and endure for the appointed time. They were "common," as subject to his needs, just as, according to the Lord's own comparison, the Sabbath ordinance was of no force to set aside the higher obligation of the temple services. (Matt. xii. 5.)

The priest may only partially have understood David: we, however, can understand him without difficulty. But we can go far beyond even what David knew, and see in all these things shadows of things that were to come. We can see in David rejected the type of a greater, who as such has abrogated Jewish and legal ordinances in order to give His people that communion with Himself beyond these, of which the "bread of presence" speaks. But we must look at this more closely.

It is striking indeed that, while the shew-bread is spoken of and commanded in the book of Exodus, we have to wait till nearly the end of Leviticus before it is particularly described. Where we should naturally expect to find it, it is omitted; and the place in which it is actually found is in that fifth part of the book, in which, as the Deuteronomy part, the *ways* of God are set before us. It comes, in fact, immediately after the typical account of those "set times" in Israel, which represent those dispensational "ways," that, while they include Israel, go far beyond His purposes toward her. (Lev. xxiii.)

But not only so, the institution itself,—most strangely, as it would seem, for an Israelitish ordinance,—is found in that chapter immediately following this, in which, in contrast with Israel's rejection (seen in the punishment of the blasphemer), God's maintenance of light and communion with Himself in Christianity is shown. (Lev. xxiv., *notes.*) And the latter of these is what the shew-bread represents! How plainly it is what our own rejected David may claim by special right!

When we come to look at the details, how fitly do they unite with such a thought! For we have seen how this "bread of presence" speaks of Christ for us on high, the true "corn of the land" upon which His people feed, and in whom they are brought to God and accepted of Him. "It is *presence*-bread, with the incense of His acceptability upon it, and the *twelve* loaves making us to know His representation of His people, their identification with Him before God." But this is special *Christian* position, as well as communion. How justly again may our David distribute such bread as this among His own!

Thus the Lord vindicates the title of His followers, who follow Him in His poverty and rejection, to that which is indeed ennoblement and enrichment passing thought. Here we find the food with which faith, obedient to His call, is recruited and sustained; and it is received from the priest's hand, who is Ahimelech, "the king's brother." In Christ the King and Priest are thus in close relationship, and such a ministry of blessing as we have been thinking of must of course come from the great High Priest. His mediatorial work is that from which of necessity all this comes.

Now we have noticed the presence of the enemy, the Edomite, whose name, if names have meaning, seems at first sight a strange enough one in such a connection. It is Doeg, "the fearful"; but are not our fears the greatest enemies that can be to our David and His followers, when being Himself rejected, to follow Him means to share His rejection? Who is not conscious of it? Nor need we wonder to find him chief among such shepherds as a Saul might have. His

is there not here under thy hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business was urgent. And the priest said, The [p]sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou smotest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in the covering behind the ephod. If thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other save that here. And David said there is none like that; give it me.

[p] ch. 17. 51.

4. (xxi. 10–15.) The experience of weakness.

[4] And David arose and fled that day from the face of Saul, and went to [q] Achish king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king

[q] ch. 27. 3. *ctr.* ch. 17. 4.

presence, "detained before Jehovah," not of his own free will we may be sure, will be found to have its disastrous effects on the future near to be. Meanwhile we can trace a more than superficial connection with what follows here, where David, in answer to his request for spear or sword, has put again into his hand Goliath's sword, with which he had slain the giant. The death which has annulled death, and which abides in perpetual memory with God, what a defense is that for the people of God, in all the attacks of the enemy! What a weapon against fear itself! Thus they are both fed and furnished.

In all this nothing has been said of David's deception, fraught with such evil consequences as we know it was to him who at this time succored him. The man whose life yields us, more perhaps than any other, the most fruitful types of the Lord Jesus Christ, shows himself thus how far removed from the perfection which he shadowed. But who is not? Upon such things Scripture itself in general makes no comment. Such is man! "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of"?

(iv.) And this is manifest in the next act of David: with the sword of the Philistine champion in his hand, he flees to the Philistines, and to Gath, the city of the giant, from the face of Saul.

The experience of weakness is one with which God would have us thoroughly well acquainted. It is the healthful condition of a creature, necessary to him as such, and no distress but the opposite, in proportion as we know God as the One in whom "we live and move and have our being." Then we can be still and let Him show His might, and under the shadow of His wings find refuge. Sin has made such experience more than ever necessary for us, by the very fact that it has made distress of weakness, which could never be were the breach between us and God fully healed. Faith implies this healing; but we must know ourselves little indeed, if we know not how weak faith is. Every fresh need demonstrates it, and thus the manifold experiences are ordained to us, which, whatever shame they may cause us by the way, are to end in glorifying Him in all things, and thus in truest blessing for ourselves.

David is indeed now brought low, into just the place of glorious revelations of the living God, or painful revelations of the flesh in man. He finds for himself the latter, just by taking counsel of his own wisdom and his fears. We do not know by what strange or plausible arguments he succeeded in persuading himself that refuge was to be found in Gath, among the enemies of Israel, against whom he had gained all his victories and his fame. The human heart is so subtle an advocate that it can make its way through the plainest and most contradictory array of facts to its conclusion; but it cannot bring the event to harmonize with this. David thus finds at Gath his own history against him, and the glorious achievements of God by him his bill of impeachment in the court of Achish. What else could he expect? Could he even desire that they should accept him as an apostate from those convictions that had nerved his arm and strengthened his heart in those days but a short time past? or suppose that, this pressure over, he would not return to be the same enemy of the Philistines that he had been before? Yet what an account to give, that he must be a debtor to Philis-

of the land? did they not sing of him one to another in dances, saying, [r]Saul hath smitten his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore [s]afraid of Achish king of Gath. And he [t]changed his behavior before their eyes, and acted like a madman in their hands, and scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. And Achish said unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: why do ye bring him to me? have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this one to rave against me? Shall this [fellow] come into my house?

5.(xxii.1-5.) Training for the kingdom.

[5]And David went from thence, and escaped to the [u]cave of Adullam; and his [v]brethren heard of it, and all his father's house, and they came down to him thither. And there gathered themselves unto him every one that was in [w]distress, and every one that was in [x]debt, even every one that was [y]bitter of soul, and he became [z]captain over them: and there were with him about [a]four hundred men.

r ch. 18. 7.
s *ctr.* ch. 17. 32.
t Ps. 34. Title.
u Jud. 6. 2. Ps. 57. Title. Ps. 42. Title.
v *ctr.* ch. 17. 28.
w *cf.* Lk 4. 17–19. 2 Sam. 23. 8–39.
x *cf.* Lk 7. 41–43.
y *cf.* Mt. 11. 28–30.
z Jud. 11. 3. *cf.* Heb. 2. 10.
a ch. 23. 13.

tine compassion for that refuge which the God of Israel had failed to be to him? How inconsistent and miserable is unbelief!—only consistent in tending to gravitate to a continually lower depth. Is there possibly a place in which God is not sufficient? Thence it is easy to reach the question, Where is He then sufficient? Faith, to justify itself at all, must take and keep the highest level,—an omniscient, omnipresent, all-sufficient, ever available God; and then how does the nothingness of man only give occasion to the display of the power and glory of God!

But in a Philistine refuge to maintain faith at this level is not possible: there is inevitable, therefore, the collapse which follows. The mention of his own great deeds makes him sore afraid before Achish, king of Gath; and to save himself he sinks yet lower, acting the madman in the presence of them all, and escaping under cover of what in the East was considered in some sense a divine possession. Thus a real shame must be made to retrieve from a false shame, and a sham folly rescue from the consequences of the real one. Openly the Lord does not interfere: He cannot honor unbelief by doing so: yet to shame it is to give real help. Still there is no victory over the Philistine here: the victory is rather on his side.

(v.) But David has escaped, and that every way: we find him next back again in Israel; and, though still a fugitive, yet with God, and gathering strength. At Adullam a company begin to gather round him, at first apparently as poor in character as bankrupt in resources; yet out of these are developed the mighty men of whose exploits by and by we shall hear much, and who encircle David when he rises to the throne. Disciplined by danger and strife and adversity, they go in and out with one who has the power of winning men to himself, and are won, and modeled upon the pattern of their great leader. What is represented here is simple enough for those who realize Christ to be still rejected by the world; to others it will not be. Scripture still, however, asserts, whether the days be changed or not, that "if we *suffer*, we shall also reign with Him"; and again, that we are "joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we *suffer* with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17.)

Thus, though Christ is gone from the earth, there is still possible, still necessary, a fellowship with Him in His sufferings,—a fellowship of those whose hearts have been won by Him in such sort as to make them practically associates with Him in a life not of the world, and with which the world therefore has no sym-

And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab; and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my [b]father and my mother, I pray you, come forth, [and be] with you, until I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

And the [c]prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of [d]Judah.

[b] *cf.* ch. 27. 11.

[c] *cf.* De. 18. 15. ver. 20. with Zech. 6. 13.

[d] Ps. 63. Title.

pathy. It may be true that only exceptionally they are found now "in dens and caves of the earth," and that the time is past when "witness" and "martyr" were but the same word, as implying the same thing. Satan changes his tactics without ceasing to be Satan; and the world may adopt the Christian dress without ceasing to be the world. Still, under whatever exterior, the essential opposition remains.

Adullam we have already taken to mean "a witness indeed," and appropriate enough is such a meaning here. A witness that cave was to the state of things in Israel: the anointed king with such a poor little handful of followers round him, and these brought to him by their necessities. Yet here was the path with God, though of even the people of God but few indeed were there. How plain that majorities decide nothing in the things of God,—and that we must guard ourselves, at all costs, from being carried away with them! The faith that cannot walk independent of man has little indeed to evidence itself to *be* faith. And yet how sadly does the tendency to go in droves manifests itself among the people of God. Conscience thus loses its place as what is before God alone, and the whole character of life is lowered.

Once more David's faith seems to waver now. His family has fled to him; and lives more precious to him than his own are in his hand. How often does this dependence of others upon us test more the simplicity of faith than anything simply affecting ourselves! The thought of Moab as a refuge for his father and mother would be most natural indeed to a descendant of Ruth; but her history, nevertheless, had a widely different lesson for him. Strikingly similar, in effect, are those two names — Elimelech, "my God is king," and Jesse, "Jehovah exists." Elimelech and Jesse, fugitives in Moab, how contradictory to the import of their names! And the Moabitess, who left her country to come into poverty and reproach in Bethlehem, would *she* have counseled a return to Moab? No; for the word is—David's own word, when he had learned the lesson—"*Dwell in the land*, and verily thou shalt be fed." (Ps. xxxvii. 3, Heb.) The land was Israel's inheritance, God's gift, of which nothing therefore could deprive the faith that laid hold of it. Of this we have warning directly: for when he had safely deposited his father and mother with the Moabite king, how natural, when rest allures, and the cords of a new relationship are felt, for David to make himself also a "hold" there! But the prophet's voice — a new prophet, whose name speaks of militant energy, Gad, like the patriarch's — drives him forth again: "Abide not in the hold: depart, and get thee into the land of Judah."*

How readily we seek escape from trial! And indeed we do well not to seek trial, or brave it. Being what we are, the right prayer is naturally for us, "Lead us not into temptation." Distrust of self is right, and a proper spirit to face trial itself with. Then if, after all, He appoints this to us, we go into it clinging fast to Him, and we are safe and blessed: for "my brethren," says James, "count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James i. 2–4.) How wonderful a reward! — and how simple a way, apparently, when we know in Whose hands we are! But, ah, the many hands in which we *seem* to be,—the Sauls', the Doegs', the people of whom we have deserved quite other things! How hard to accept

* Which shows that the "hold" was not at Adullam, which was *in* Judah.

And David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

6. (xxii. 6–23.) The massacre of the priesthood.

6 And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him. And Saul was abiding in [e]Gibeah under the tamarisk upon the height, and his spear was in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. And Saul said unto his servants that were standing about him, Hear now, ye [f]Benjamites: will the son of Jesse [g]give you all fields and vineyards? will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, that ye have all conspired against me, and there is no one of you to show me when my son maketh [covenant] with the son of Jesse; and not one of you is [h]sorry for me, or showeth me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me to lie in wait as at this day. And [i]Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with the servants of Saul, answered and said, I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub; and he inquired of Jehovah for him, and gave him victuals, and the sword of Goliath the Philistine he hath given to him. And the king sent to call Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, the priest, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob; and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub, And he said, Here am I, my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye [j]conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me as a lier in wait, as at this day? And

e ch. 14. 2.
f *ctr.* ch. 18. 16.
g ch. 8. 14, 15.
h ch. 23. 21.
i Ps. 52. Title.
j *cf.* ver. 8.

these cruel and remorseless hands as the tender hands of God! There lies the victory of faith for us; there is the inlet of rest and assurance into the soul. This is our true inheritance also, from which we *may* not be driven, and *must* not wander, our "land of Judah," which is "praise."

"And David departed, and came to the forest of Hareth:" Hareth means "cutting," as of engravers' work. It occurs but once in the Old Testament, and that with reference to the handwriting of God upon the tables of the covenant (Ex. xxxii. 16): a precious link of connection, surely; for thus was it that God was graving His law, His holy will for him, upon David's heart. Slowly it might be, and painfully; for so the different material of the tables of the new covenant implies; but the work done will be the greater and more glorious.

(vi.) Saul in the meanwhile pursues the path to ruin; and by the massacre at Nob cuts off with a violent hand all that yet links him with God and the sanctuary. No doubt he believed in the treason of Ahimelech, for he was in no mood for due consideration or the weighing of evidence. He is possessed with enmity against David, and the uneasy sense that he is striving with the inevitable. Caution and reserve are gone. He freely imputes to others, even to those of his own tribe with whom he has surrounded himself, only the self-interest which alone he can appreciate. Of necessity he is not sure of them, and can only hope to keep them as long as he can make the better offer.

Of course he does not lack those who for their own gain will act as ears and hands for him, and nurse his suspicions into more assurance. He hears of David's movements; he learns of his son's covenant with him; he finds, through Doeg, how David has been succored at Nob. What a curse to one in Saul's condition the ready sympathy with which it meets,—the many arms outstretched

Ahimelech answered the king and said, And who is so [k]faithful among all thy servants as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thy house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute anything to his servant, [nor] to all the house of my father; for thy servant knew nothing of all this, little or much. And the king said, Thou shalt [l]surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the couriers that were standing beside him, Turn and slay the priests of Jehovah, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and showed it not to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to strike Jehovah's [m]priests; and the king said unto Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests; and Doeg the Edomite turned and fell himself upon the priests, and slew that day eighty and five persons that wore a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, he smote with the edge of the sword, [n]both men and women, children and sucklings, and ox, and ass, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub escaped, and his name was [o]Abiathar, and fled after David. And Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the priests of Jehovah. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I am accountable for all the lives of thy father's house. [p]Abide with me; fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou art in safeguard.

Experiences. 1. (XXIII. 1–13.) The rod of power the shepherd's rod.

(XXIII.–XXVI.)

4. [1]And they told David, saying, Behold, the [q]Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the [r]threshing-floors.

k ch. 18. 5.

l ch. 14. 44.

m *cf.* ch. 20. 33.

n *ctr.* ch. 15. 7–9.

o ch. 23. 6. 2Sam. 8. 17. 1 Ki. 1. 7.

p ver. 5. *cf.* 1 Ki. 2. 26.

q ch. 4. 1, etc.

r *cf.* Judges 6. 4, 11.

to pull down over the precipice one blindly seeking it! Such is the shadow that dogs the powerful,—the retribution that the world has for the sinner. With Saul now the kingdoms whose history is here before us are drifting far apart: until the end we have only to say to him as he crosses the path of David.

The massacre at Nob throws the priesthood with Abiathar upon the side of David. With him, therefore, prophet, priest, and anointed king are found together; as yet, however, rejected of the people. Divine resources are his, though the path of obedience is that of trial still; and that we are to find in a new series of trials.

4. We have thus seen David furnished for the path: he has followers to about the number of 600 now, by whom we shall soon find him doing service in Israel, and God is openly with him, according to His manner of showing this in the days we are looking back to. Yet he is not, on that account, spared the trial by which he is exercised and fitted to be the true Shepherd-King of Israel when the fullness of time is come. These experiences come now more fully before us, which, while putting before us Him who was in all things tempted like as we are, apart from sin, speak necessarily, therefore, also of those who tread the wilderness-path after, yet with, Himself. The history of David here is, of course, largely that of His followers also.

(i.) First of all, we see the power that is his from God; but power only to be

And David [s]inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And Jehovah said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, [t]Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more, then, if we go to Keilah, against the ranks of the Philistines? And David inquired of Jehovah yet again; and Jehovah answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into thy hand. And David went, with his men, to Keilah, and fought against the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with great slaughter: and David [u]saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. And it was [v]told Saul that David had come to Keilah; and Saul said, God hath abandoned him to my hand; for he is shut in by entering a city that hath gates and bars. And Saul summoned all the people to battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul devised evil against him, and he said to Abiathar the priest, [w]Bring hither the ephod. And David said, Jehovah, God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. Will the lords of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath

[s] *cf.* ver. 10. ch. 14. 37.

[t] *cf.* John 11. 8.

[u] *cf.* ch. 30. 26–31.

[v] ver. 19, etc.

[w] ch. 30. 7.

used against the enemies of Israel, and not against Israel themselves. The Philistines fight against Keilah, and rob the threshing-floors. The sanctuary "refuge," which we have taken Keilah to figure (p. 107, *n.*), will naturally be an object of attack by those whose whole power depends upon keeping the people of God out of their place of acceptance and blessing in Christ in heavenly places. No way so effectual, either, as that of robbing the threshing-floors! For the provision of bread being cut off, the word of God and He who is the true Word, being no longer ministered, this would of necessity starve them out even of such a vantage-ground. Saul, too, could not be expected to work any deliverance here: we do not find him even attempting it. A secularized religion scarcely favors more such blessedness than the ritualistic one would do. Thus David is evidently the whole resource of Keilah. By the Lord's guidance, therefore, and with His assurance of success, he quiets the fears of his men, and leads them against the foe; and Keilah is delivered,—a glorious and important victory.

Saul soon hears that David has come to Keilah: nothing is heard or accounted of the essential service he has rendered there; for, in fact, Saul is quite ready to sacrifice Keilah itself, if only in this way he can gratify his hatred against David. David is the representative of that higher kingdom which Saul must obey or fall before it, and disobedience has become with him now a frenzy of despair, in which he maintains a hopeless fight with forces that are known to be beyond him utterly, though he will not own or act as if they were so. How solemn, how tremendous, is such a struggle of the creature with the Creator, where the creature puts forth all its power of self-deception to prevent for a little time the collapse that is inevitable, and which will only be in this way more utter and irretrievable when it comes!

David, on the other hand, is more than ever completely intelligent as to the Lord's will, and in subjection to it; and for him the end is not doubtful, nor one

heard? Jehovah, God of Israel, I pray thee, tell thy servant. And Jehovah said, He will come down. And David said, Will the lords of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And Jehovah said, [x] They will deliver [thee]. And David arose, and his men, about [y] six hundred, and they went forth from Keilah, and went about whither they could go. And it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.

2. (xxiii. 14–28.) Ziph: the process of refinement; and the "rock of divisions."

[2] And David abode in the [z] wilderness, in strongholds. And he abode in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul [a] sought him continually, but God gave

x *cf.* Psalm 109. 4.

y ch. 22. 2. ch. 30. 9.

z ch. 22. 5.

a ver. 26. ch. 25. 29.

that he must disguise from himself. The power that works through him is as much master of Saul as of the Philistine enemy; but it is power held back by long-suffering mercy. The shepherd-rod is the type as much of service as of authority; and the shepherd-ruler is the incarnation of self-sacrifice, as Saul is of self-seeking. The people are not yet ready for the kingdom that shall be, and the men of Keilah will, under pressure, deliver up their saviour. David and his men evacuate the city, therefore, to take up again their wandering life, going whither they may; and Saul is still, as it may seem, the master. But master he cannot be who is not, before all things, master of himself; nor he master of himself who has not God his master. God is the harmony of all things: in the first revolt against Him are unloosed the forces of intestine strife, the issue of which is dissolution.

(ii.) David has escaped his enemy once more, and is now at Ziph; not escaped from the trial which is needful, and which is, under God's hand, carefully controlled for blessing,—a blessing which, in the Psalms, he acknowledges many times with a full heart. Ziph means, according to what we have before seen, "refining." (See pp. 97, 113, *n.*) We shall find it in this place also answering to its name. The precious metals—the gold and the silver of this world—need such processes to display their character; and all the elect of God—save One, the chief Elect—need and undergo this process. In David we have to recognize, as often said, not simply the One who never needed purification, but also those who are identified with Him by His grace, and who, on their way to share with Him His kingdom and glory, share with Him too the sufferings that lead on to this. Thus the apostle, after giving us the precious examples of those who have "obtained a good report through faith," and bidding us in like manner "run with patience the race set before us," puts before us the absolutely perfect example, "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith." He does not say or mean "of *our* faith," but that He it is who has led in and perfected in His own Person the whole course of faith: "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God."

He goes on to inspirit us with His example: "for consider Him who endured such great contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds; *ye* have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

With Him who was perfect, this sin against which He strove was something external to Himself, the very contradiction of *sinners* to the Holy One, the necessary contradiction of natures utterly opposed. But for those who but feebly follow Him in this path, and thus partake also of His sufferings, even the very opposition and persecution of men are overruled for a purpose which there could not be with Him; and so the apostle goes on: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the *chastening* of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. xii.)

him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life; and David was in the wilderness of Ziph, in a wood. And Jonathan the son of Saul arose, and went to David into the wood, and [b]strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt [c]reign over Israel, and I will be next to thee: and that Saul also, my father, knoweth. And they two made a [d]covenant before Jehovah. And David abode in the wood; and Jonathan went to his house.

And the [e]Ziphites came up to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Is not David hiding himself with us in the strongholds in the forest, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south side of the waste? Now then, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down, and it shall be our part to deliver him into the hand of the king. And Saul said, Blessed are ye of Jehovah, for ye have [f]compassion upon me. Go, I pray you, make more sure yet, and know and see his place, where his haunt is, who hath seen him there: for they tell me he acteth very [g]subtly. See, then, and take knowledge of all the lurking-places wherein he hideth himself, and come again with certainty, that I may go with you; and it shall be, if he be in the land, that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah. And they arose and came to Ziph before Saul; but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah, south of the waste. Saul also and his men came to search; and

b *ctr.* ver. 18. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 12. Jno. 9. 34–38. Heb. 13. 10–13.
c ch. 24. 20.
d ch. 20. 16.
e Ps. 54. Title. ch. 26. 1, 2.
f ch. 22. 8.
g *cf.* ch. 18. 30.

David thus could not represent the Lord in the "place of refining," for in Him there was no mixture, no dross to be purged away; but there are those identified with Him on earth, witnesses for Him, and thus sharers of His sufferings, and who, even as this, do need their Ziph, and find it; aye, even, the foremost that have stood for and represented Him, and with whom He has stood. So that Ziph has its place in this picture.

In regard to its numerical position also, let us notice that "refining" is a process of *separation*, of division, for which the number stands; and so the conflict between good and evil tends to necessary separation of one from the other. Men and things come to show themselves according to their affinities: as here, a Jonathan for, a Saul against; and by reason of use we have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. This discernment is the result of the light, the judgment that takes place in the presence of God, who is Light.

Accordingly, the story of Ziph divides into two parts, what is evidently for, what is apparently against. In reality, *all* is for, both the one and the other. But we begin with what is evidently so when, while Saul is seeking for his life, Jonathan comes into the wood where David is hidden, and strengthens his hand in God. How blessed is thus the meeting of faith with faith, and how great the confirmation which we can bring each other! This is mentioned first also, the strength of it being needed for the encounter soon to come. And this is part, too, of the process of refinement, the encouragement in God without which we could not so abide the separation and strife. A tender hand is laid upon this poor human material, to hold it steadfastly in the place of necessary testing.

The Ziphites are recreant Judæans; but they, too, do the work they are permitted. From the hill of Hachilah to the wilderness of Maon Saul pursues the object of his hatred, just being on the point, as it would seem, of getting him into

they told David, and he went down the [h]cliff, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul heard it, and he pursued after David to the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on the [i]one side of the hill, and David and his men on the other side of the hill; and David made haste to get away from Saul, and Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to take them. And there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Make haste and come; for the [j]Philistines have invaded the land. And Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines; therefore they called the place Sela-hammalekoth.

3. (xxiii.29-xxiv.) Engedi: the "spring of the leaper."

[3] And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strongholds at [k]Engedi. And it came to pass when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, they [l]told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. And Saul took [m]three thousand men, chosen out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came to the sheep-cotes on the way, and there was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men were abiding in the recesses of the cave. And David's men said unto him, [n]Behold the day of which Jehovah said unto thee, Behold, I give thine

h ch. 25. 2.
i *cf.* Ps. 118. 12. Ps. 38. 12.
j ver. 1.
k ch. 24. 22.
l ch. 23. 19.
m ch. 26. 2.
n ch. 26. 8.

his hand, when the Philistines become God's hands to fence David around, and Saul turns from his prey at the "rock of divisions," to go against the national enemy. Plainly not David's "subtle dealing" has saved him, but a divine intervention; and this is of the greatest importance, not only for Saul, but for David himself. He has been brought to an end of all his own wisdom and power, to find himself held fast in the hand of God, and covered by the hand that holds him. And this realization of the nothingness of man and of the greatness of God, with the joy of knowing that this God is for us, what is it — stated, indeed, in its mere elements — but that which every refining process is designed to bring us to?

(iii.) We next find David at Engedi, once more pursued by Saul, but who now falls into the hands of the one he persecutes, only to experience, however, from him the mercy he had never shown, and to be shamed into a confession of his sin, which for the time ends the pursuit.

Engedi means "the spring of the young goat," the force of the latter word being really "leaper." The spiritual thought has been already indicated (p. 117, *n.*); and there should be such agreement between the name and the history before us as we have been able to trace in similar cases. Engedi reminds us of how the wilderness and the hill of difficulty become, in the wisdom of God, schools of training and begetters of strength. The tread and leap of the wild goat are the very symbols of strength gained by practice and ready surmounting of difficulties; and the name is interpreted and emphasized for us where it is said that "Saul went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats (climbers)." They were in the same circumstances with the same results. Trial and hardship were forming character, as we know, and mighty men were being produced, masters of themselves and of their circumstances, by the exigencies they were called to face from day to day.

This is, in fact, what we find as to David here. The unexpected visit of Saul to the cave, putting him so completely into his power, the murmured suggestion of his followers that here now was his God-given opportunity, the moment call-

enemy into thy hand, and thou shalt do unto him as it is good in thine eyes. And David arose, and [o] cut off the skirt of Saul's robe secretly. And it came to pass afterwards that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, the anointed of Jehovah, to put forth my hand against him: for he is the [p] anointed of Jehovah. And David checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul arose out of the cave, and went on the way. And afterward David arose and went forth out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king! And Saul looked behind him; and David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. And David said unto Saul, Why dost thou hearken to men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, thine eyes have seen to-day, how that Jehovah gave thee to-day into my hand in the cave; and they spake unto me to slay thee, but [it] spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord, because he is anointed of Jehovah. And see also, my father, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor [q] transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou [r] huntest my life to take it. Jehovah [s] judge between me and thee; and Jehovah avenge me of thee; but my hand shall not be on thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, From the wicked proceedeth wickedness; but my hand shall not be on thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a [t] dead dog, after one flea. Jehovah therefore shall be judge, and judge between me and thee, and he shall see, and plead my cause, and do me justice from thy hand. And it came to pass, when David had ended speaking these words to Saul,

o ch. 26. 11.
p 2 Sam. 1. 14.
q Ps. 18. 20.
r ch. 25. 29.
s Ps. 7. 3-5. Ps. 26. 1.
t 2 Sam. 9. 8.

ing for the briefest possible decision,—all needed the alertness and self-command of habitual exercise, such as befitted the divinely appointed ruler of Israel. And David displays remarkably these qualities. You see the evident effect of continual waiting upon God, in the abhorrence of the thought of injuring Jehovah's anointed, the tender conscience which smites him for even cutting off Saul's skirt; while yet his heart throbs in the impassioned appeal which for a moment melts down all Saul's pride and enmity, and might seem to have found beneath it a true and quite other man than the Spirit-forsaken, spirit-haunted despot of the past sad years.

And in all this David shows us also the source of this spiritual power which he manifests, or in the language of the symbols here, the "spring" at which the "leaper" has renewed his strength. One sees manifest in his utterance the supreme assurance that he has, that all things are absolutely subject to Him to whom he has committed himself entirely, who will in His own time and way act for him, and whose acts he will not anticipate. "Jehovah shall be judge, and judge between me and thee; and He shall see, and plead my cause, and do me justice from thy hand. My hand shall not be upon thee." This seems but the

that Saul said, [u]Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and [v]wept. And he said unto David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast [w]recompensed me with good, and I have recompensed evil unto thee. And thou hast declared this day the good thou doest unto me, in that when Jehovah delivered me into thy hand, thou didst not slay me. For [x]if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? therefore Jehovah recompense thee good for what thou hast done to me to-day. And now, behold, I [y]know that thou shalt certainly be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand: now [z]swear unto me therefore by Jehovah that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, nor destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul; and Saul went unto his house; and David and his men went up to the [a]stronghold.

u ch. 26. 17.
v *ctr.* ch. 20. 41.
w 1 Pet. 3. 9.
x Num. 35. 26, 27. *ctr.* Matt. 5. 44.
y ch. 23. 17.
z 2 Sam. 9. 1. 2 Sam. 4. 10.
a 2 Sam. 5. 17.

4. xxv.) The experience of failure. The type returns to Israel, tested by a new message from the king.

[1]And Samuel [b]died: and all Israel were gathered together, and lamented him, and they buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And there was a man in [c]Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel. And the man was very [d]great, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. And the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of [e]good understanding and of a beautiful countenance; but the man was churlish and evil in his doings: and he was of the house of [f]Caleb. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep: and David sent ten young men; and David said unto the young men, Go up to Carmel, and when ye come unto

b ch. 28. 3.
c ch. 23. 25.
d *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26.
e *cf.* vers. 18–31.
f *cf.* Judg. 18. 30.

lesson of Ziph learned,—a simple but a great one indeed; and the two sections are thus naturally connected.

Saul is more than touched; he is broken down,—seems, indeed, won: owns everything, realizes the mercy that has spared his life, declares his own conviction that David should be king,—engages him, even with an oath, not to cut off his seed after he is gone: alas, in a short time has forgotten all this, and is as if it had never been! How terrible is that process of self-hardening in a human soul, wherein "all things work together for" ruin and destruction, as they do "for good to them that love God"!

Spite of Saul's confession, David can no more trust him, nor can Saul even expect him to do so: he abides still in the wilderness.

(iv.) David has gained a great victory: he has conquered Saul; he has done much more,—he has conquered himself also. Nay, he has shown the habitual self-mastery of one walking before God indeed. Alas, the next time we are called to contemplate him, it is as an example of thorough failure, and that in the very way in which he has just proved himself so strong and competent.

Saul was not only unmistakably his enemy,—he was a most powerful one; and David had suffered at his hand the loss of most things that men count dear. Nor had his will and power to inflict evil come to an end, when just now he had been so magnanimously spared, and dismissed in peace. Nabal, with whom he has now to do, is proud and niggard and insolent. But he cannot be considered

Nabal, greet him in my name, and say thus unto him, [Long] life! [g]Peace be to thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace to all thou hast! And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds were with us; we [h]hurt them not, nor was aught missing of theirs, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will tell thee. Let therefore the young men find favor in thine eyes; for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, what thy hand may find unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And David's young men came, and spake unto Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered the servants of David, and said, [i]Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there are many [j]servants nowadays, that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take [k]my bread and my water, and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give them unto men whom I know not whence they are? And David's young men turned to their way, and went back, and told him according to all these words. And David said unto his men, [l]Gird on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword, and David girded on his sword; and there went up after David about [m]four hundred men, and two hundred remained with the baggage.

And one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wil-

g *cf.* Lk. 10. 5. *cf.* Matt. 21. 33–42.

h ch. 30. 31.

i *cf.* Ex. 5. 2.

j *cf.* Is. 53. 2, 3.

k *cf.* Lk. 12. 16–18.

l *ctr.* Lk. 9. 52–56.

m ch. 23. 13.

in the same sense an enemy; and if he were, he is comparatively a contemptible one. David has no cause whatever to fear him, nor does he for a moment suppose he has. With such an one how easy to show the magnanimity that, in Saul's case, cost so much to show! Yet it is precisely here that David fails entirely. He is not merely not magnanimous; he is terribly severe and unjust. Denied that to which he might have a moral but no legal claim, and his well-meant advances answered with insult, he blazes out into a passion of wrath which would involve with Nabal every male of his house in indiscriminate slaughter! Can this be the same man that we have been just admiring for his noble control and self-forgetfulness? Can this be the shepherd-king of Israel, the ruler in the fear of God, the man who himself has felt the unrighteousness of men, the man disciplined in the school of suffering? It is the same, and not the same. It is David, no longer under the control of the presence of God: and at once all that is sweet and gracious, all that is of God, all the fruit of His training, all the good of having been under His yoke, seems suddenly to have passed away. Is there, then, a Saul existing even beneath a David, ready to show itself as soon as the guard upon it is removed, unchanged from what it was before faith came? Yes, it is even so; and our best remedy is to be conscious of it, that we may realize our utter dependence at all times upon God. Not as sinners, but as saints it is that we are called to "have no confidence in the flesh." Prayer is a constant necessity to us; and, waiting upon the Lord, our strength shall be renewed. What a lesson have we here in David! No ephod was needed or used when the four hundred started on their dread errand to Carmel! But the message he had not sought came to him from the faithful grace of God through the lips of a woman.

Yet everything now depended upon David: Samuel had just passed away, and at Ramah the watch of the prophet was kept no more. If our interpreta-

derness to greet our master, and he flew at them. But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor missed anything, as long as we companied with them, while we were in the field. They were a [n]wall unto us both night and day, all the while we were with them, keeping the sheep. And now understand, and see what thou wilt do: for evil is determined against our master, along with all his house; and he is such a son of Belial, that one cannot speak unto him.

[n] ver. 7.

And Abigail hastened, and took [o]two hundred loaves, and two skins of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five sacks of parched corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them upon asses. And she said unto her young men, Pass on before me; behold, I come after you. And she [p]told not her husband Nabal. And as she was riding on the ass, and descending by the covert of the hill, behold, David and his men coming down opposite her: and she

[o] *cf.* Gen. 43. 11. 2 Sam. 16. 1.

[p] ch. 14. 1. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.

tion of Ramah has been in anywise correct, then the end of the long watch there must be as significant, typically, as the death of Samuel was, in fact, for the nation of Israel at the time. Samuel is Christ as Prophet, before the true King has come to His rights on earth; and thus, with his gatherings of prophets round himself, would correspond to David as the rejected King, with his gathering also of those who maintained his kingship: both in entire subjection to the will of God which ordained a time of patience and long-suffering. Both, therefore, look on to the present Christian times, as we have seen, when Christ, though not personally on earth, watches here with the company of His prophets, and is in the midst of those who confess Him Lord. Ramah, then, being gone, should imply the end of the present night-watch, which would imply also a related and yet far different change at hand for the confessors of Christ's Lordship. His reign is now at hand, which they are to share with him; and the facts of the history answer to this.

David arises, therefore, and goes down to the wilderness of Paran, which has before been interpreted to mean "adornment." (Num. x. 12, *n.*) As to application, however, everything is different here from there; and in the line of things now before us we should naturally think of how "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." (Isa. xxxv. 1.) But this is only nearing, and not accomplished.

A very difficult part of the history is now before us, if we are still to find, as we ought ever to find, a spiritual meaning underlying the literal, and if this is to be traced also in consistent relation to the whole connection here. But such a meaning assuredly there is, and therefore we may go forward with confidence in the promise to him that seeks. The need of this consistency is as much a help as it is a safeguard to interpretation; and it were better to acknowledge entire failure than to wrest from its proper force the blessed word of truth.

We are now introduced to a man of Israel, who lives in Maon, and whose possessions are in Carmel, but who is Nabal, "a fool," and is smitten for his folly. We shall find these places together in a portion of Judah which we have already taken as memorializing for us Israel's blessedness,—Maon, "dwelling-place," the habitation of God, and Carmel, "vineyard," His place of fruit. But yet the man, though of the house of Caleb, has fallen away wholly from the character of Caleb. He is, as already said, Nabal, the word used where it is written, "The *fool* hath said in his heart, There is no God." Indeed this is what in Scripture "folly" mostly connects or is identified with, just as, for Scripture also, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

met them. Now David had said, Surely in [q] vain have I kept all that belonged to this [fellow] in the wilderness, and there was nothing missed of all that was his; but he hath returned me evil for good. So may God do, and more also unto the enemies* of David, if I leave by morning light of all that belonged to him a single male. And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and descended from the ass, and [r] fell down upon her face before David, and bowed herself to the earth, and fell at his feet, and said, [s] Upon me, even me, my lord, be this iniquity; but let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine ears, and hearken to the words of thy handmaid. Let not my lord now regard this man of Belial, Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but I thy handmaid saw not my lord's young men whom thou sentest. And now, my lord, as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing that [t] Jehovah hath withheld thee from coming with bloodshed and from helping thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies and all that seek thy hurt be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thy servant hath brought unto my lord, let it be given to the young men that follow my lord. Forgive, I pray

[q] *cf.* Ps. 73. 6-13.

[r] Gen. 24.64. Ruth 2. 5.

[s] ver. 23.

[t] Ps. 51. 14.

*One might imagine an interpolation here, and the Septuagint omits "the enemies of"; the Vulgate and Chaldee versions, however, agree with the Hebrew, and indirectly the Syriac and Arabic. See Lange's Commentary.

In contrast with this apostate Israelite is his wife Abigail, the "father (or source) of joy," as most would render it; but this, for its application, must look forward.

Nabal is shearing his sheep in Carmel, and indulging himself after his manner, when David sends ten messengers to salute him, and to seek from him an acknowledgment of the care which had been taken of his shepherds in the wilderness. Nabal answers, reviling David as a runaway servant, and his company as people of whom he knows nothing; and flatly refuses. David's men return to convey the message and the insult to their master.

If we take all the surroundings here, the death of Samuel and the altered position of David, the character and connections of Nabal, we seem naturally to find in him a picture of Israel in its apostate condition in the last days. The demand of David's messengers would then speak of the last divine testimony to them, which finds them in ignorance and rejection of Christ and of His claims, but which calls out from them, however, a remnant figured in Abigail, who, by their faith avert judgment from the nation, though divine judgment comes indeed on the apostate part. The remnant, severed thus from their old relation, are united to Christ as King of Israel.

That Abigail pictures the Christian Church is a view which has most of these points against it, while it seems to involve a dislocation of the period at which it is presented. Abigail has, in fact, much that reminds us of Ruth, widowed also by the judgment of God, and united to her deliverer,— while, of course, there are in either case features entirely different.

That there are no difficulties in this view one could not affirm, but they are found to the full as much in any application to the Christian Church, and are precisely the same difficulties. The principal one seems to be the failure so manifest in David on this occasion, and out of which Abigail is herself the means of his deliverance. This, in any view of this kind must, of course, be left out of

thee the trespass of thy handmaid; for Jehovah will indeed make my lord a [u]sure house, because my lord fighteth Jehovah's battles, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. But a man hath risen up to [v]pursue thee, and to seek thy life: but my lord's life is bound in the bundle of life with Jehovah thy God, and the life of thine enemies shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And it shall be when Jehovah shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall appoint thee [w]ruler over Israel, that this shall be for thee no stumbling-block, nor offense of heart for my lord, to have shed blood causelessly or for my lord to have helped himself with his own hand. And when Jehovah shall have dealt well with my lord, then [x]remember thy handmaid.

And David said unto Abigail, [y]Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel, who sent thee to-day to meet me, and blessed be thy discernment, and blessed be thou, who hast kept me this day from coming with bloodshed, and from helping myself with my own hand. But in very deed, as Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, who hath restrained me this day from doing evil to thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, before morning light there had not been left to Nabal any male. And David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, [z]Go up in peace to thy house: see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and accepted thy person.

And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a [a]feast in his house like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, and he was very drunken: so she told him nothing, little or much, till morning

[u] 2 Sam. 7. 16.
[v] *ctr.* ver. 10. ch. 24. 11.
[w] *cf.* 2 Sam. 4. 9, 10.
[x] *cf.* Gen. 40. 14. *cf.* Lk. 23. 42, 43.
[y] *ctr.* 2 Chr. 16. 7–10.
[z] Lk. 7. 50.
[a] Dan. 5. 1, etc.

all significance in relation to the type, as simple failure of the human representative. Such things we have elsewhere, though scarcely one, perhaps, where the failure comes into such prominence. And David must, of course, in this case stand for Christ personally,—could not represent any who might be identified with His claims on earth,—so that the incompatibility cannot in this way be accounted for.

The failure seems manifest in David, even to the end: the double marriage at the close cannot impress one favorably as to him, though here the type would not be affected by it. Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, may, indeed, in this way, as in the case of other double types, confirm the significance. For here, again, we have the name of a city finding place with Maon and Carmel in the same section of Judah's territory, and one which has a manifest relation to Israel's restoration. Thus, when she is united to the Lord in the coming day, Ahinoam, the "kin of pleasure," may be a not unsuited name, while Jezreel reminds us of the promise then to be fulfilled, "I will sow her to me in the earth." To the Christian Church the latter could hardly apply.

The faith of Abigail recognizes in David, the king in Israel, his personal blamelessness, his zeal for Jehovah. She foresees his actual reign and the establishment of his house, with the destruction of all that would oppose itself. She prays to be remembered of him in that day. Nothing seems to indicate more than Jewish hopes.

light. And it came to pass in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, and his wife told him these things, that his heart [b]died within him, and he became like a stone. And it came to pass in about ten days that Jehovah [c]smote Nabal, and he died. And David heard that Nabal was dead, and he said, Blessed be Jehovah who hath pleaded the cause of my reproach at the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil; and Jehovah hath [d]returned Nabal's wickedness upon his own head. And David sent and spake with Abigail to take her to be his [e]wife. And the servants of David came to Abigail to Carmel, and spake unto her, saying, David hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to be his wife. And she arose and [f]bowed herself with her face to the earth, and said, [g]Behold, thy handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail hastened, and arose, and rode upon the ass, with her five damsels that went after her, and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

And David took [h]also Ahinoam of Jezreel: and they became both of them his wives. But Saul had given [i]Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

(XXVI.-XXXI.)

5. [1]And the [j]Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah,

b Josh. 2. 9.
c Lk. 12. 20.
d 1 Ki. 2. 44. Gal. 6. 7.
e *cf.* Ex. 2. 21. Eph. 5. 25.
f ver. 23.
g *cf.* Lk. 1. 38.
h *cf.* Deut. 17. 17.
i ch. 18. 20, 21.
j ch. 23. 19.

Governmental results. 1. (xxvi.) "Righteousness as the light."

The numerical division seems to be also in accordance with this, the number (4) being on the one hand that of testing and failure, while it is also that of the earth, and thus of the earthly people, Israel. Whatever the moral lessons, therefore, the typical application seems, after all, clear.

5. If the double marriage of David shadow the union of Israel with the Lord, then we have reached in it beyond the time of trial, and David's sufferings would seem as if they should now end. But this they do not, although we do not find him in the same distress again. Still Saul once more pursues him, though now only to fall more openly into his hand, and to be braved and shamed in the very midst of his people. We have, in fact, reached an end, and begin a new section with the twenty-sixth chapter, from which to the end of the thirty-first we have put before us, according to the Deuteronomic character of a fifth part, the results in divine government, this open shame and self-condemnation of Saul, with the corresponding justification of the man he persecutes, being but the first of these. The sojourn of David in the Philistines' land, parallel with the full apostasy and judgment of Saul at the hand of the Philistines, claims, even as history, a new section for itself; and to this his last pursuit of David is clearly the preface. Even in his words to Saul he already speaks of being driven out from the inheritance of Jehovah among the worshipers of other gods, as it is immediately afterwards that his resolution to escape into the Philistines' land is definitely announced; and this is the end of Saul's pursuit of him.

The section as a whole is clearly retributive, and illustrative of the divine ways in government. Even Saul's lapse into witchcraft is of this nature, and the end is so, beyond question. David, too, finds his discipline from God, though the end with him is tender mercy. As a direct type of Christ he does not appear in it, while even in his failure he may but too well typify those witnesses for Him upon earth with whom He identifies Himself ever, as in His words to a later Benjamite, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?"

(i.) David is hiding himself in the hill of Hachilah ("obscurity"?), and the

facing the waste? And Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, and with him [k]three thousand men, chosen men of Israel, to seek for David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul encamped at the hill of Hachilah which faceth the waste, by the way-side; and David abode in the wilderness. And he saw that Saul had come after him to the wilderness: now David had sent out spies, and knew that Saul had come indeed. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul was encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the wagon-rampart, and the people pitched round about him. And David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, saying, [l]Who will go down with me unto Saul, unto the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came unto the people by night, and behold, Saul lay [m]sleeping within the wagon-rampart, with his javelin stuck in the earth at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. And Abishai said unto David, [n]God hath to-day delivered thine enemy into thy hand; and now let me smite him, I pray thee, with the javelin, even to the earth once, and I will not do it the second time. And David said unto Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against the [o]anointed of Jehovah, and be guiltless? And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah shall surely smite him, or his day shall come and he shall die; or he shall descend to [p]battle and be taken off: Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed. But now take away, I pray thee, the [q]spear which is at his head, and the cruse of [r]water, and let us go. So David took the spear, and the cruse of water from Saul's head, and they departed, and no man saw, nor knew it, nor awakened: for a deep sleep from [s]Jehovah was fallen upon them.

And David crossed over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great space being between them. And David [t]cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? And Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest unto the king? And David said unto Abner, Art not thou a man? and who is like thee in Israel? and why

k ch. 24. 2.

l *cf.* ch. 14. 6, 7.

m *cf.* Judg. 4. 21.

n ch. 24. 4.

o Ps. 105. 15. ch. 1. 15.

p ch. 31. 5.

q *cf.* ch. 18. 11.

r *cf.* Eph. 5. 26.

s *cf.* ch. 16. 14.

t ch. 24. 8.

Ziphites once more carry the news to the king. The sight of the messengers, with the memories connected, should have been enough to hinder Saul's pursuit, but it does not; and this time, therefore, he is made to proclaim openly his own shame and David's righteousness. The man he seeks seeks him in turn, and in the very midst of his camp has once again his life at his disposal; only again to spare it, however, while yet stripping him of his spear, the emblem of his sovereignty, and carrying off the pitcher of water at his head. What a realization for Saul of the vanity of the conflict in which he is engaged!—and what an

hast thou not guarded thy lord, the king? for one of the people came to destroy the king thy lord. It is not good, the thing that thou hast done; as Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not guarded your lord, the anointed of Jehovah. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water which was at his head. And Saul knew David's voice, and he said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord the king. And he said, Why doth my lord pursue after his servant? for [u] what have I done? and what evil is there in my hand? And now let my lord the king hear his servant's words: if [v] Jehovah have stirred thee up against me, may he accept an offering; but if they be children of men, cursed be they before Jehovah: for they have [w] driven me out this day from cleaving to the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods. And now, let not my [x] blood fall to the earth away from Jehovah's face! for the king of Israel is come out to seek one [y] flea, just as they hunt the partridge in the mountains. And Saul said, I have [z] sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my life has been precious in thine eyes to-day: behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. Jehovah render to every one his righteousness and his faithfulness; for Jehovah delivered thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth my hand against the anointed of Jehovah. And behold, as thy life was highly esteemed in mine eyes to-day, so may my life be highly esteemed in Jehovah's eyes, and may he deliver me out of every strait! And Saul said unto David, [a] Blessed be thou, my son David! thou shalt certainly do [great things], and shalt surely prevail. And David went his way; and Saul returned unto his place.

u ch. 20. 1.
v 2 Sam. 24. 1.
w ch. 27. 1.
x *cf.* 1 Kl. 2. 10.
y ch. 24. 14.
z *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11.
a *cf.* Nu. 23. 20.

2. (xxvii.-xxviii. 2.) David in the ranks of the enemy.

[2] And David said in his [b] heart, I shall now one day [c] perish by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better

b *cf.* Deut. 15. 9.
c *ctr.* ch. 17. 32.

anticipation of the time when the secrets of the heart, developed in and moulding the life, shall be exhibited in the light,— a light in which already he found himself thus revealed! One more attempt of divine mercy this to bring into subjection this human heart, but which, even while owning the folly which has possessed it, proves itself absolutely unreceptive of it, and thus unrepentant. Saul thus draws one step nearer to his doom,— when, indeed, unsceptred, and without water for his thirst, he must meet and give account to God! Alas, how can this be so forgotten?

For David, his righteousness is brought forth in the light, and proclaimed by his persistent enemy and accuser, in the ears of all the people. Fuller justification he could not get, with the spear and cruse also for a double witness on the other side. And God has wrought this, by means of the very persistency of the persecutor himself. How ought every fear to be now at rest when again He has manifested Himself after this manner!

(ii.) Again, however, after a signal triumph, and a wonderful display of God's

for me than to [d]escape indeed into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me any more in any border of Israel. So shall I escape out of his hand. And David arose and passed over, he and the [e]six hundred men that were with him, unto [f]Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David abode with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household,—David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, and he sought for him no more.

And David said unto Achish, If now I have found [g]favor in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of the country-cities that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? And Achish gave him [h]Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth to the kings of Judah unto this day. And the time that David abode in the country of the Philistines was a [i]year and four months.

And David went up with his men, and they [j]invaded the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites: for those were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest unto Shur, and as far as the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and left [k]neither man nor woman alive, and took the sheep and the oxen and the asses and the camels and the apparel, and returned

*d cf.* Gen. 12. 10.
*e* ch. 25. 13.
*f* ch. 21. 10.
*g* ch. 29. 8, 9.
*h* Josh. 15. 31. ch. 30. 1.
*i* ch. 29. 3. *cf.* Gen. 27. 43, 44.
*j cf.* ch. 30. 1. ch. 15. 7.
*k etr.* ch. 15. 8.

goodness to him, the faith of David collapses, and he sees nothing before him but one day perishing at the hand of Saul. He forms a resolution, therefore, in which certainly he is guided by no wisdom from God, and leaves the inheritance of the Lord for the land of their heathen enemy. He goes not even to Moab, but to Gath, the city of the giant he had overcome by faith, and where, also, he had once before, through unbelief, failed so pitiably: but from the higher height the deeper depth; and, once having given way to unbelief, one false step necessitates another, one lie another to confirm it; cruelty has to be added to deceit, many lives having to pay forfeit for the preservation of his own. How dastardly a thing is unbelief!

Details here may be difficult enough, while the moral lesson is unmistakable; and it is this which, in all this part, seems most to be emphasized. We may note, however, how a child of God away from God may be a very zealous destroyer of evils that are unquestionably such,—all the while remaining as far as ever away; nay, increased zeal against what is external to us often accompanies a state in which self-judgment is proportionately deficient.

David's plea for himself we have already heard. He simply puts the blame of where he is upon others: "they have driven me out," he says; and he has no consciousness of aught but truth in saying it. Yet while it was true that they had fully the responsibility of this, it is not true that a saint of God, walking with God, can be "driven" to anything. To be led of God and to be driven of men are two different, contrasted, and, in this case, incompatible things. It was but a dishonor done to the Lord's care and love to imagine the possibility of falling into Saul's hand, and perishing without coming to the kingdom, when the divine anointing was upon his head. Saul himself, in his moments of sanity, knew better. The fruits of this lapse of faith did not fail to declare sufficiently its character; and mark it out, not as the sin of others, but his own.

Ziklag, "the pressure of the wave," (p. 137, *n.*), becomes thus suitably his resi-

and came to Achish. And Achish said, Whither have ye made a raid to-day? And David said, Against the south of [l]Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell of us, saying, So did David. And this was his custom all the while he abode in the country of the Philistines. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to [m]abhor him: and he shall be my servant forever.

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to [n]fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out [o]with me in the army, thou and thy men. And David said unto Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said unto David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of my head perpetually.

3. (xxviii. 3–25.) Saul, seeking to the dead, finds an oracle of doom from Samuel's lips.

[3]And Samuel was [p]dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had [q]familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land. And the Philistines gathered together, and came, and encamped in Shunem. And Saul [r]gathered all Israel together, and they encamped in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was [s]afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And Saul inquired of Jehovah, but Jehovah [t]answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. And Saul said unto his servants, [u]Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said unto him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul [v]disguised himself, and put on other garments, and went, with two men with him, and they came to the woman by night. And he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring up him that I shall name to thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, and how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land: why, then, layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware unto her by Jehovah, As [w]Jehovah liveth, there shall no guilt attach to thee for this thing. And the woman said, whom shall I

*l* *cf.* ch. 23. 22. ch. 19. 15.
*m* *cf.* Gen. 34. 30.
*n* ch. 23. 1, etc. *o* ch. 29. 23.
*p* ch. 25. 1.
*q* Ex. 22. 18. Lev. 20. 27. Acts 19. 18, 19. Rev. 22. 15.
*r* ch. 13. 3. *ctr.* Judg. 7. 2–8 with Lev. 26. 8.
*s* ch. 17. 11.
*t* ch. 14. 27.
*u* ver. 9. *cf.* Rom. 2. 21–24.
*v* 1 Ki. 14. 2.
*w* *cf.* ch. 19. 6.

dence. Circumstances have, indeed, been too much for him: he is not now an overcomer. Let him pursue but a little farther the road on which he has entered, and he shall be captain of the body-guard to a Philistine king forever!

(iii.) Meanwhile Saul, in terror of the gathering Philistines, and forsaken of God, sinks to the lowest, and consults one of those dealers with familiar spirits whom he had sought in time past to cut off out of the land. Disguised and under cover of the night, he steals with two others to the dwelling of the witch at Endor. Nor does he hesitate to swear by Jehovah Himself to protect her in

bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she [x]cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake unto Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? thou art even Saul. And the king said unto her, Fear not: but what hast thou seen? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god ascending from the earth. And he said unto her, What is his form? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel; and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said unto Saul, Why hast thou [y]disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul said, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war upon me, and God is [z]departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams: and I have called thee, that thou mightest make known unto me what I shall do. And Samuel said, Why, then, dost thou ask of me, seeing Jehovah is departed from thee, and become thine enemy? Jehovah hath even done for himself as he [a]spake by me, and Jehovah hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, [even] to David. Because thou didst not [b]hearken to Jehovah's voice, nor execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath Jehovah done this thing to thee to-day. And Jehovah will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be [c]with me; and Jehovah will give the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

And Saul fell straightway his full length on the earth, and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no bread all the day nor all the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thy servant hath hearkened to thy voice: I have even put my life in my hand, and have hearkened to thy words which thou spakest unto me. And now, I pray thee, hearken thou also to the voice of thy servant, and let me set a morsel of [d]bread

x *cf.* Ex. 8. 18, 19.

y *ctr.* Luke 9. 30, 31.

z ch. 16. 14.

a ch. 15. 10-30.

b *cf.* Num. 27. 14. 1 Chr. 10. 13, 14.

c *cf.* 2 Ki. 16. 20.

d *ctr.* ch. 21. 3-6.

the violation of Jehovah's law. He bids her bring up to him Samuel; and to the woman's own consternation Samuel in reality appears. This was beyond her art, and shows her plainly a higher power overmastering it: the "keys of hades" were in no witch's hand; and while he appears alone to her, to her discomfiture, he speaks directly to Saul while he hides his face from him; and in brief judicial words announces his doom at hand. To-morrow would the Lord give Israel into the hand of the Philistines, and he and his three sons would be with him (in death). The kingdom torn from him would pass over to David, according to what had long since been pronounced, when he had openly disobeyed the divine word as to Amalek.

That the judgment of Amalek—that is, of the lusts of the flesh (Ex. xvii. *n.*)—is the test which that must abide which stands for true and divine government on earth, is so clear that there is no need to dwell very much upon it. Here "the powers that be" fail, and have failed from the beginning, although they are still

before thee, and eat, that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on the way. And he refused, and said, I will not eat. And his servants, with the woman also, compelled him, and he hearkened to their voice: and he arose from the earth, and sat upon the couch. And the woman had a fatted calf in the house; and she hastened and killed it, and took flour and kneaded it, and baked of it unleavened bread. And she brought it before Saul, and his servants, and they ate, and rose up, and went away that night.

4. (xxix.) David's further lapse.

4 And the Philistines gathered together all their armies unto Aphek; and Israel encamped by the spring which is in [e]Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed by hundreds and thousands, and David and his men passed on in the rear with Achish. And the princes of the Philistines said, What are these [f]Hebrews? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who hath been with me these days or these years, and I have found no fault in him since the day he fell [unto me] unto this day? And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make the man return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an [g]adversary to us: for wherewith should he make himself acceptable to his lord, but with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying, [h]Saul hath smitten his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

e Judg. 6.33. 1 Ki. 18. 45. 46.
cf. Hos. 1. 4. 5, 11.
cf. Hos. 2. 22.
f ch. 13. 3.
g ch. 14. 21.
h ch. 21. 11

a great mercy, and upheld of God as such. That with them also, as with Saul, much has come in upon the heels of this, there can be no right question either. The form and the extent of that opposition to Christ which has been manifested by them have varied with various times and various places, and will be judged of differently, according to individual standpoints, also. We have found such differences in the history of Saul himself, the precise application of which will be naturally correspondingly difficult. At the end Scripture distinctly shows that the kings of the earth will turn from God in a more direct and outward way, and seek to seducing spirits; Saul's conduct here being only a hint, as it were, of the dread reality. This it would lead us too far to enter upon here: to those who are acquainted with the prophecies of the last days, however, it will be plain that Saul's history will be in this respect more than re-enacted in that of the Gentile powers. That it is according to the principles of divine government that, turning away from God, men should fall of necessity into the power of Satan, is again plain,—plain as is the revival of demonism in many forms in our own days, and in that of necromancy especially, along with a decline of faith in the word of God too marked for any but the willingly blind to doubt. All this should make the close of Saul's reign and life here exceedingly solemn for us.

(iv.) In the next chapter David, also, is seen once more in terrible failure. Actually starting out to accompany his leader to the war, the Philistine lords with keener instincts than the unsuspecting Achish, refuse point-blank such doubtful auxiliaries. Naturally enough they cannot believe that David is going

And Achish called David, and said unto him, As Jehovah liveth, thou art upright, and thy going out and coming in with me in the host is good in mine eyes: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming to me to this day; but thou art not acceptable in the eyes of the [i]lords. And now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. And David said unto Achish, But [j]what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king? And Achish answered and said unto David, I know that thou art good in mine eyes as an angel of God; but the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle; and now rise up early in the morning with thy lord's servants that are come with thee; and, as soon as ye are risen early in the morning, and have light, depart. And David [k]rose up early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

[i] ver. 4. ch 6. 4.

[j] *ctr.* ch. 20. 1.

[k] ch. 17. 20.

(5. xxx.) The government of God in action.

5 And it was so, when David and his men came to [l]Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag and burned it with fire; they had even taken [m]captive the women that were in it, both small and great: they had slain none, but carried them off, and gone their way. And David and his men came to the city, and behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters were taken captive. And David

[l] ch. 27. 6, 8.

[m] *cf.* Gen. 14. 11, 12.

to turn his back upon his whole history, nor doubt that he will take advantage of his opportunity to reconcile himself to his master with the heads of his allies. God has thus, in His mercy, opened to David a way of escape from the snare in which he has entangled himself; and with what fervent satisfaction might we expect to find him accepting it. How full of praise and thankfulness will he be for such a deliverance! Yet, alas, he is here nothing but a hypocrite. Israel are only the "enemies of my lord the king," against whom it is his right and privilege to fight: and he dares to appeal to his unspotted conduct while with Achish, knowing the absolute insincerity of it all! But such is the saint away from God, and so easy it is to become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"! Should not our constant cry be, "Search me, O Lord, and try me!"?

(v.) Thus man is fully shown for what he is. David, no more than Saul, can claim anything on the ground of personal righteousness: grace can be alone his confidence, as with any child of man. Thus as to all Israel the new throne established in Zion is a throne of grace, though it be true that grace has not the dimensions which attach to it with us: in this way it is but a type; and, indeed, a faint one.

But if grace is to be shown, it must be according to holiness; there could be none apart from this. And so the government of God must act now in chastening; David must be searched out thoroughly, and made to realize his condition. Accordingly, there is an irruption from the south: some of that very tribe upon which God had pronounced judgment, a judgment which Saul had been deposed for not rightly executing, make a raid upon Israelites and Philistines alike, burn Ziklag while deprived of its defenders, and carry away everything in it. When

and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and [n]wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was in a great [o]strait, for the people spake of stoning him; for the soul of all the people was bitter, every man for his sons and his daughters; but David [p]encouraged himself in Jehovah his God.

And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, I pray thee, [q]bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. And David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he said unto him, Pursue! for thou shalt surely overtake and without fail recover. And David went, he and the [r]six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, and those that were left behind stayed. And David pursued, he and [s]four hundred men, and two hundred remained behind, who were so [t]faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. And they found an [u]Egyptian

[n] ch. 11. 4.
[o] Ex. 17. 4.
[p] Ps. 56. 3, 4. Heb. 13. 6.
[q] ch. 23. 9. 2 Sam. 2. 1.
[r] ch. 27. 2.
[s] ch. 25. 13.
[t] Judg. 8. 4. ch. 14. 28.
[u] *cf.* Deut. 23. 7.

we know what Amalek means, we can easily understand, the soul having wandered from God, this irruption of Amalek: and even in this way to such the outbreak of the lusts of the flesh may be used of Him to startle and convict the conscience; and so for recovery in the end. Absent in the Philistine camp, and while parading his mock zeal against the people of God, David little knew that the hand of the destroyer was upon his most cherished possessions, that the Amalekites had already stripped him bare, and all that were with him. He and they return to find but the blackened remnants of their city, and wives, children, and all that belonged to them, swept away. More than this, he has to prove that when not walking with God, the tie between man and man also is loosened: his own devoted followers, stung with the misery into which his late course had brought them, murmur about inflicting on him death by stoning,—the judgment of an Achan,—and he is, indeed, "in a great strait."

But then it is, that out of its heavy stupor David's soul awakes. Faith proves its power amid the wreck of nature. The very fact that the judgment is so manifestly of the Lord brings him back into the glorious Presence from which he has wandered, and it is—blessed be God—the old sweet familiar Presence. The surge of bitter distress has landed him in the haven of rest. The shadow has proved but the shadow of His wings; and David, humbled, and so purified, has become once more the master of his circumstances because of himself: "David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God."

Immediately Abiathar and the ephod are his resource: "and David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop?" Nature had, of course, decided this already; but the man of faith will not move at the bidding of nature. Faith questions when all seems plain; as it finds a plain road, also, amid all perplexities. "Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?" He recognizes now the judgment of God: he must humbly ask of the depths of the divine compassion, Is it irrevocable? And how prompt and tender is the answer: "Pursue! for thou shalt surely overtake, and without fail recover." Then at once he is a man of activity again, the energetic and courageous leader of men: by the time they have reached the brook Besor, one third of his little army are prostrate with the speed they make. They are but four hundred now, with the stamp of weakness upon them, therefore; and themselves, we may be sure, weary and wayworn; but the battle is to be Jehovah's.

Now there is cast in the way an Egyptian, spent with hunger and thirst, whom

in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread and he ate, and they made him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two cakes of raisins; and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had not eaten bread nor drunk water three days and three nights. And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou, and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We invaded the south of the Cherethites, and that which belongeth to Judah, and the south of Caleb, and burned Ziklag with fire. And David said unto him, Canst thou [v]bring me down to this troop? And he said, Swear to me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor [w]deliver me into my master's hands, and I will bring thee down to this troop. And he brought him down; and behold, they were spread abroad over all the land, [x]eating and drinking and keeping festival, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. And David [y]smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day; and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men who rode upon camels and fled. And David rescued all whom the Amalekites had taken away; and David rescued his two wives. And there was [z]nothing missing of theirs, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, nor spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them: David brought back all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, [which] they drave before the [other] cattle; and they said, This is David's spoil.

And David came to the two hundred men who were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made to stay at the brook Besor. And they came forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him; and David drew near to the people, and saluted them. And all the wicked men, and men of Belial, of those that had gone with David, answered and said, Because they [a]went not with us, we will not

v Judg. 1.24.

w *cf.* Rom. 6. 6, 7, 14.

x *cf.* Matt. 24. 38, 39.

y *cf.* ch. 23.5.

z Gen. 14.16. *cf.* Is. 1. 26.

a *cf.* Acts 15. 38, 39. *cf.* Matt. 20. 12.

they restore to life, and comfort with the assurance that he shall not be put back in bondage to the Amalekite, his master. A natural man brought anew to life at the brook of "good news" (Besor), and freed from the lusts of the flesh, which he has served,—this is the very one to guide the hand of judgment which falls now on the Amalekites. All is recovered out of their hand, as the divine oracle had promised; and with this they fall heirs to an immense booty besides: for in the goodness of God a *mere* recovery seems impossible. He brings us back to Himself with more than we had lost,—fruitful experiences and knowledge of God's ways in government and in grace. All this is the law of restitution, according to God,—of the trespass-offering which Christ makes good to us.

So David and his four hundred return to the brook Besor. There those who were too exhausted to go over the brook had remained with the baggage. They

give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. And David said, Ye [b]shall not do so, my brethren, with that which Jehovah hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand. And who will hearken to you in this matter? for [c]as his portion is that goeth down to the battle, so shall be his portion that tarrieth with the stuff: they shall share alike. And so it was from that day forward; and he made it a statute and ordinance for Israel unto this day.

And David came to Ziklag, and he [d]sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah, his friends, saying, Behold, a present for you of the spoil of Jehovah's enemies: to those that were in Bethel, and to those that were in Ramoth of the South, and to those that were in Jattir, and to those that were in Aroer, and to those that were in Siphmoth, and to those that were in Eshtemoa, and to those that were in Rachal, and to those that were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those that were in the cities of the Kenites, and to those that were in Hormah, and to those that were in Chorashan, and to those that were in Athach, and to those that were in Hebron, even to [e]all the places amongst which David went, he and his men.

6. (xxxi.) Catastrophe.

[6]And the Philistines were [f]fighting against Israel; and the men of Israel [g]fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines smote Jonathan and Abinadab and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the [h]archers hit him, and he writhed sore because of the archers. And Saul said unto his armor-bearer, [i]Draw thy sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid: and Saul took the sword and [j]fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul [k]died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together. And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the plain, and they that were beyond Jordan saw that the

b *cf.* 2 Sam. 19. 22.

c Josh. 22. 8. Nu. 31. 27. Ps. 68. 12.

d *cf.* ch. 25. 6–8.

e ch. 25. 7.

f 1 Chr. 10. 1–12.

g ch. 4. 10.

h 2 Sam. 1. 18. Gen. 49. 23.

i Judg. 9. 54.

j *cf.* 2 Sam. 17. 23.

k ch. 28. 19.

come forth with joy to greet their victorious comrades; but here, untouched by the mercy they had experienced, there were those who refused to recognize their right to share the spoil. But the sense of grace is too strong to permit this.

(vi.) In contrast with David's recovery and victory Saul perishes in Mount Gilboa, and Israel suffers a sore defeat. The Philistines take possession of the neighboring cities, and all is in complete collapse in the land. Three of the sons of Saul perish with him. There is now no anointed of the Lord but David. Typically it is the end of rule on earth as owned of God, and that in immediate anticipation of the true King, whose reign follows. Ishbosheth has no title,

men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they [l]forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and [m]dwelt in them.

And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they [n]cut off his head, and stripped off his [o]armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the houses of their [p]idols and among the people. And they put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan.

And the inhabitants of [q]Jabesh-gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul, and all the valiant men arose, and went all [r]night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and [s]burned them there. And they took their bones, and [t]buried them under the tamarisk at Jabesh, and [u]fasted seven days.

l Judg. 6. 2.
m *ctr.* ch. 7. 14.
n ch. 17. 51.
o ch. 17. 38.
p ch. 5. 1, 2.
q ch. 11. 1. 2 Sam. 2. 4-7.
r *cf.* Gen. 14. 15.
s *cf.* 2 Chr. 16. 14.
t 2 Sam. 21. 11-14.
u Gen. 50. 10.

SUBDIVISION 2. (2 Sam. i.–iv.)

*The growth of David's Kingdom.*

1. (i.) The crown brought to the God-ordained king, to reign in righteousness.

1 AND it came to pass after the [v]death of Saul, when David had returned from [w]smiting the Amalekites, that David abode at Ziklag two days. And it came to pass on the [x]third day, that, behold, a man

v 1 Sam. 31. 3-6.
w 1 Sam. 30. 10-20.
x *cf.* Gen. 22. 4, etc.

but is in distinct rebellion against the will of God, for all Israel knows that David is the true anointed: and thus will "man's day" end upon earth, in open revolt "against the Lord, and against His Christ." (Ps. ii. 2.)

That Philistinism has sought persistently the subjection of the powers of the earth is familiar history. That it will accomplish their final ruin is not, perhaps, plainly prophesied. Yet the view of the woman Babylon, which is given us in Rev. xvii., shows her riding upon the "beast" of civil empire, as the eleventh verse seems clearly to show, in its last form. But this last form (under the eighth head) is that in which it becomes openly apostate, and "goes into perdition"; and the woman's supremacy over it then, though not preserved to the end, (for it finally throws off the woman and destroys her, ver. 16,) would seem at least quite consistent with the view of its having brought the former character of rule to an end, or helped essentially to do so. But I leave this now for the consideration of those who have understanding in the word of prophecy: at another time it may demand a fuller notice.

The lesson in divine government here is obvious. The body, in its ghastly dishonor, fastened to the wall of Bethshan,—quiet, indeed, at the "house of quiet,"—his armor in the house of their female deity, these things are the heathen satire upon such an end. Amid all this the prompt action of the men of Jabesh-Gilead is like the resurrection of a good deed from the mass of corruption. They save, however, but the bones for burial: the rest can only be given to the fire. Thus the hope of man in man comes to its end with Saul,—the "asked for," the people's choice. All now depends on David; but here, also, how poor a dependence, except as God is pleased to work with and through this feeble instrument. The crown brought to *Ziklag* (the Philistine guerdon for feigned unfaithfulness to the crown itself) speaks more loudly than the defeat at Gilboa, of human instability and untrustworthiness. Even so the light of a brighter dawn could shine through David,—a glory far beyond his own. For "all these things happened unto them for types."

came from the camp, from Saul, with his garments [y] rent and earth upon his head; and it came to pass that when he came to David, he fell to the ground and did obeisance. And David said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel have I escaped. And David said unto him, [z] How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he said the people were [a] fled from the battle, and that many also of the people were fallen and dead, and moreover Saul and Jonathan his son were dead. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead? And the young man that told him said, I happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa, and behold, Saul was [b] leaning upon his spear, and lo, the chariots and horse-

[y] 1 Sam. 4. 12. ch. 13. 24-33.

[z] *cf.* Col. 2. 1. *cf.* 1 Thess. 3. 1-8.

[a] 1 Sam. 31. 1.

[b] 1 Sam. 31. 3, 4.

SUBD. 2.

We have closed thus the story of David prior to his reception of the throne to which he was destined. We are now to see him in a new character, in which he becomes plainly the type of the One true King that is to be,—King not over Israel only, but to the ends of the earth. Here it will be no great wonder, however, if, while the general truth is clear, the details should be to us often obscure, if only from their very brightness. David is not, indeed, as we soon find, by any means a perfect reflection of the glory of Christ as King. We could not rightly expect him to be. Often he seems to show us, as in designed contrast, just those blots and disfigurements which would suggest the interpretation to be by opposite application to the Lord of glory. Yet all this brings additional difficulty into it, if in the end it may tend, perhaps, as one may readily conceive, to fullness of vision. Assuredly we have, in any case, what the Spirit of God designs for our instruction, with the fullest command of the material, we may be sure, which will fill out the picture. It is our privilege to inquire what the wisdom of God has given us in it, with the certainty that it is perfect wisdom.

At the outset there seems a very serious difficulty, which, however, lessens as we take it to Scripture for a solution. All our views of Christ's coming kingdom must, of course, be derived entirely from Scripture. We are not prophets, but simply interpreters of prophecy; and our partial understanding of this is apt to lead us into what we find afterwards to be in contradiction with other statements which we had known, yet overlooked. So, no doubt, it is here. Christ coming in the clouds of heaven, to set up His kingdom and glory over the earth,—with this we naturally associate the thought of rapid, almost instantaneous, action, all enemies at once put down by divine power exerted throughout all the world, all nations summoned at once before the bar of His judgment-seat: and to this last the separation of sheep and goats, as given in our Lord's own prophecy of His coming (Matt. xxv.), seems to give strong confirmation. But in this case the history presented here would be quite unintelligible. With the setting aside of Saul, David by no means comes to an uncontested throne, nor is the opposition even in Israel at once put down. For seven years and a half he reigns at Hebron over Judah only. Another king of the house of Saul carries off the allegiance of the other tribes, until first his supporter Abner, and then himself, are cut off by the hand of violence. After this there are long wars with surrounding nations, making the reign of David an emphatic contrast to that of Solomon, who is himself the type of the "Prince of peace." All this, at first, seems entirely against all correspondence between the history and the prophecy.

But the cloud lifts measurably as we gaze upon it. It will be necessary, however, to take up in some detail the consideration of this subject,—all-important to the interpretation of the book in which we now are, and try to realize what Scripture teaches.

men followed hard after him. And he turned round and saw me and called unto me; and I answered, Here am I. And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I said unto him, I am an [c]Amalekite. And he said unto me again, Stand over me, I pray thee, and slay me: for anguish hath possessed me, because still my [d]life is whole in me. And I stood over him and slew him; for I knew that he could not live after he was fallen; and I took the [e]crown that was on his head, and the bracelet that was upon his arm, and have brought them hither to my lord. And David took hold on his clothes and [f]rent them; and all the men that were with him [did] likewise. And they mourned and wept and fasted until even, for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for Jehovah's [g]people, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen with the sword.

c *cf.* 1 Sam. 15. 8, 9.

d *cf.* 1 Sam. 31. 4, 5.

e *ctr.* 1 Sam. 21. 9.

f ch. 3. 31, 32. ch. 13. 31. *ctr.* Mt. 26. 65.

g *cf.* Jer. 8. 21. Jer. 9. 1.

And first, let us remember that, with all the strength of the divine hand, God's dealings have been hitherto characterized by a patience which seems to us often extreme slowness. In the cherubic figures of the book of Revelation, which picture the features of the divine government over the earth, the slow ox succeeds the impetuous lion; and the order here and throughout seems to be corrective of the conceptions we might entertain from that which was earlier in the series. Power that cannot be turned aside (Prov. xxx. 30) is what is indicated in the lion; and this is the first necessity for any true thought of government at all; but we should go far wrong if we supposed that this was the characteristic method in God's governmental dealings, to leap at once to the end with one resistless spring. Thus, as I have said, the patient ox succeeds the lion. While the lion, moreover, would naturally suggest power hostile in character, the ox is the very type of the minister to man (1 Cor. ix. 8–10). Following this, again, "the face of a man" assures us that this apparent slowness is not unintelligent, but the contrary: it is God seeking to manifest Himself to us, as in humanity He has done, that we might have knowledge of His ways. It need not then surprise us if when the Lord acts even in such crises of judgment as when He appears in the clouds of heaven to judge the world, there should be nevertheless an entirely different procedure from what we might imagine.

Again, let us remember, that prophecy, as it is fore*seen*, so it is fore*shortened*, history. The element of time is, perhaps, most of all what is absent from it,—except, of course, as to order of succession. The seventy weeks of Daniel are a conspicuous example of this, the seventieth being separated from the rest by a long gap of time, into which comes the whole present dispensation. In the passage which the Lord quotes in the synagogue of Nazareth (Isa. lxi. 2), from the proclamation of "the acceptable year of the Lord," with which he closes what was in that day fulfilled, the prophecy goes on without a break to "the day of vengeance of our God,"—not even yet come. And similarly the events of the New Testament dispensation were hidden from the prophets of the Old Testament (Matt. xiii. 35).

That when the Lord comes again in the clouds of heaven it will be in visible glory, so that "every eye shall see him," is pressed too far when it is taken to mean that He will then be visible to all the world. This the Lord Himself, by Isaiah, assures us: for after He has said that "the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire," and "it shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory"; yet the prophecy goes on immediately to add, "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, . . . to the isles afar off that have not heard

And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he said, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thy hand to destroy the [h]anointed of Jehovah? And David called one of the young men, and said, Come near [and] fall on him. And he [i]smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood is on thy head: for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the anointed of Jehovah.

[h] 1 Sam. 26. 23.
[i] ch. 4.10-12.

my fame, *neither have seen my glory;* and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." (Isa. lxvi. 15–19.) Thus we find that "every eye shall see Him" only intimates (what in connection with any other event it would be taken to intimate) a visible personal appearing of Christ, and not that the whole world will at that time see Him.

And again, though He come in visible glory to set up His kingdom upon earth, we are not anywhere told, that I am aware, how far He may continue or continue to be seen upon the earth during His reign here. It is certain that over the land of Israel there is to be a "prince," the laws for whose guidance are carefully given by Ezekiel (xliv.–xlviii.); and that the glory appears in the temple in the same manner as of old (xliii. 1–9).

To come nearer to what is before us here, while there are judgments that are executed by the Lord personally when He comes (Isa. lxiii. 1–6; Zech. xiv.; Rev. xix. 15, 21), yet we read of Israel also in action, and of human wars in which they take possession of the lands destined for them (Jer. li. 20–24; Obad. 18–21; Mic. v. 7–9). After which, as it would appear, Gog with his great confederacy can still come up, not knowing with whom they are contending, and think to find the restored nation an easy prey (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.).

All this is very different from what our own thoughts would be of a kingdom such as is prophesied of in the hands of Him who has the "rod of iron." Yet Scripture alone can be trusted to give us right thoughts in a matter like this, and we need do no more than point out the texts which decide very plainly what the truth is. They certainly enable us better to understand the typical application of this part of David's reign, whether or not we may apprehend the details. To these we must now turn, believing that the promise given shall be fulfilled to us, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened."

In this first subdivision, then, we find David in possession only of part of a divided kingdom. We trace the growth of his power, spite of enemies and hindrances, until by the death of Ishbosheth the way is prepared for him to the throne of all Israel. During all this time (seven years and a half) his throne is in Hebron, that place of many and cherished memories, linked forever with the faith of his pilgrim fathers, from Abraham to Jacob. "Communion," with all that it implies, must be the power of a kingdom; and it is not without meaning that here the tribes come up, Judah first and then united Israel, to make David king. Even the divine kingdom can only have its rightful character when God dwells among the praises (and necessarily united hearts) of His people. Here, also, we see why it is in *Judah* that David begins his reign. The spiritual meaning certainly holds here; and, indeed, is very easy to be traced. Literal as the history is, of course, this in no way hinders the deeper thought, in which we see how all through it God moulds the very facts of history that they may speak to attentive hearts. Jacob's prophecy as to Judah here begins to be fulfilled.

(i.) But, before even Judah, God acts: for the people's choice this time must follow His. David is in the first place the divinely appointed king, although yet only the figure of the true: the Anointed, as we know, long since, he is now owned of God, the crown put into his hand by one of a strange and hostile race, who seeks but his own personal ends, to find judgment alone his recompense.

And David [j]lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son; and he bade them teach the children of Judah the [k]bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar:—

[l]Glory of Israel, slain on thy heights!
How are the [m]mighty ones fallen!
[n]Tell not in Gath,—
Tell not the good news in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines [o]rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!
Mountains of [p]Gilboa, let there be no dew,
[q]Let there be no rain upon you,
Nor fields of wave-offerings!
For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, [r]unanointed with oil.
From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of [s]Jonathan drew not back,
And the sword of [t]Saul returned not vainly.
Saul and Jonathan [were] [u]lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided.
They were swifter than griffons;
They were stronger than lions.
[v]Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet with delightful things,
Who put on ornaments of gold on your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
O Jonathan, slain upon thy high places!
Distressed am I for thee, my brother Jonathan;
Very [w]pleasant hast thou been to me:
Wonderful was thy love to me,
Beyond the love of women!
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war destroyed!

j ch. 3.33,34
k *cf.* 1 Sam. 31. 3.
l *cf.* ch. 21.17.
m ch. 3. 38.
n Mi. 1. 10. 1 Sam. 31.9. *cf.* Nu. 14. 13.
o Ju. 16. 23.
p 1 Sam. 28. 4. 1 Sam. 31.1.
q *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 1.
r ver. 14, etc.
s *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 1-14.
t *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 47, 48.
u cf. 1 Sam. 20. 2.
v *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 6. Prov. 31. 21.
w 1 Sam. 18. 1. 1 Sam. 20. 17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 14.

For the king, to whom all here points, is that One of whom it is written that He is "first of all . . . king of righteousness [Melchizedek], and after that king of Salem, that is, king of peace" (Heb. vii. 1): who is David and Solomon, therefore, both in one.

The order is most important: the effect cannot come before the cause, "and the *work* of righteousness shall be peace; and the *effect* of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." (Isa. xxxii. 17.) But righteousness will not be established upon the earth except by power: "let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Thus, judgment alone will answer; and "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 9, 10.) Thus we are to read David's wars, then; and thus the judgment of the Amalekite in this first chapter.

Personal profit does not seduce David into any overlooking of the crime of lifting up the hand against the Lord's anointed. Nor, on the other hand, does personal injury received prevent his recognition of all that was noble and good in the fallen king, and of the way in which God had used him for blessing to His

2. (ii.) The divided kingdom, and the war.
*a* (1–7.) David king in Judah.

2 (*a*) And it came to pass after this, that David [x]inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto [y]Hebron. And David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there [z]anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, It is the men of [a]Jabesh-Gilead that buried Saul. And David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Jehovah, who have shown this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now Jehovah show kindness and truth unto you; and I also will requite you

[x] 1 Sam. 30. 8. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 27. 1. *cf.* Ps. 23. 3.
[y] Gen. 13. 18. Josh. 15. 13.
[z, cf.] 1 Sam. 16. 13 with Matt. 3. 16, 17. ch. 5. 3.
[a] 1 Sam. 11. 1. 1 Sam. 31. 11–13.

people. The reference to the book of Jashar (of the "upright") seems in striking harmony with this, though we may be unable to explain it in any proper manner. The pathos of the lament speaks to the heart as from the heart.

(ii.) We now come to the divided condition of the kingdom, the anticipation of that into which it lapsed again in the second generation after David. In a world like this, that which is of God is sure to awaken opposition. As to Saul, though some might despise him, there was no thought of division. As regards David, every one must have known long since God's choice of him, and that Saul's house had been set aside with Saul himself. Yet Abner is able to make the feeble Ish-bosheth king over the rest of the kingdom, gradually recovering itself out of the hands of the Philistines. Two years he reigns over the whole of Israel, while David remains for all the time (seven years and a half) king over Judah only. In the last two years it must have been that Abner found himself at last strong enough to attempt the conquest of Judah also.

(*a*.) At the outset we have seen where David's strength lay. We still find him clinging to God, and guided by divine wisdom. He is assured of being Jehovah's anointed king. Saul is now dead, and his army defeated. The crown has come, in a way little to be expected, into his hand. Yet he will not be guided by providences, but must have the plain word of God to direct him, not merely whether he shall go up to Judah, but to what part. He is bidden to go to Hebron; and there he goes, allowing his men to scatter into the towns around, and there he quietly waits for whatever God has next. Good it is, this ability to wait on God on the part of a spirit so brave and energetic, in the very hour when circumstances invite to action. He is not left, however, to long patience now: the men of Judah, without waiting for the co-operation of the other tribes, assemble at Hebron and anoint him king.

That this was obedience to the divine will by which David had been long set apart to this position, saves them from the imputation of independence, with which otherwise it might have been justly charged. The Lord was the Supreme king over Israel; and therefore, when His mind was clearly known, obedience was that which alone would make for any proper unity. The course of Abner and the other tribes was mere rebellion.

Anointed long before by Samuel, this fresh anointing by the people had yet its rightful place. God's will as to this awaits the glad concurrence of human hearts to make the reign of His king truly what He would have it. For this reason, also, David makes no movement to extend his dominion over the rest of Israel. Love can be satisfied only with love. Thus also he acknowledges sympathetically the act of the men of Jabesh in their respect and gratitude toward

this good, because ye have done this thing. And now [b] let your hands be strong, and be men of valor; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

[b] Josh. 23.6.

b (8-32.) The anti-king and war.

(*b*) And [c] Abner the son of Ner, prince of the host which had been Saul's, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, and made him king unto Gilead, and to the Ashurites,* and to Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. Ishbosheth the son of Saul was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years; but the house of Judah followed David. And

[c] 1 Sam. 14. 50.

* Probably, with the Chaldee version, we should read "Asherites," a mere change of a vowel-point; though the Vulgate, the Syriac, and the Arabic, read "Geshurites."

Saul, and informs them of Judah having made him king, but goes no further: does not even hint at the higher and wider title he possesses.

(*b.*) Abner has no such scruple, and asks no counsel of God: as the "father of light," his wisdom is from himself,—inspired, of course, by that ready prompter, self-interest, or what appears to be this. As prince of the host that had been Saul's, he had opportunity also, and in Ishbosheth one who represented such shadow of title as could be derived from Saul. Ishbosheth means "man of shame," a name that might easily be supposed to be derived from his history, rather than to be his original one. We know from Chronicles (1 Chr. viii. 33) that, in fact, his original one was Esh-baal; and we have a similar change in the case of Jonathan's son Meribbaal, changed into Mephibosheth (1 Chr. ix. 34; 2 Sam. ix. 6), and even in that of Jerubbaal, changed into Jerubbesheth (2 Sam. xi. 21). In Hos. ix. 10 Baal himself is called "that shame," and it cannot be reasonably questioned that the sense of this shameful character of idolatry led to these substitutions. That there was any idolatrous meaning in the names connected with Saul's family it would be impossible to prove, the word *baal* being itself so variously applied. We have elsewhere seen it as of old even a title of God, which at last He is forced, because of its misuse, to disclaim (p. 194, *n.*).

Typically, however, the case is otherwise. When we consider the rivalry to David in its typical significance, Ishbosheth might seem a figure of Antichrist, and these idolatrous connections would then have their full force. Israel is yet to accept such a king, we know, at the time of the end, who will be consumed by the breath of the Lord's mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming. Yet in Ishbosheth himself, and in his history also, there are many difficulties in the way of such a view. The weak son of Saul is but a tool in the hands of Abner, who is all through the real heart and soul of the opposition to David. He it is, we find, who "took Ishbosheth, and brought him over to Mahanaim, and made him king." Mahanaim was the place of Jacob's vision of angels, where "God's host" and his own represented, as we know, "two camps." (Gen. xxxii. 2, *n.*) This ends in his own camp being divided into two, as Abner had in fact now divided Israel; where the camps were, moreover, hostile to one another. So had reliance on human strength wrought in all the intermediate history: for God will not be content to be a mere force among other forces; and the half-way dependence on Him, which is more than half independence, works quickly, alas, into real hostility. Abner and Ishbosheth were thus now very openly at issue with God, who had manifested very plainly His purpose in David, as Abner owns (ch. iii. 9). Spite of this, Ishbosheth's kingdom grows from its beginning in Gilead, spreading to Asher, to Jezreel, and on, till there is a united Israel in opposition to the one tribe of Judah that cleaves to David. So readily does the leaven of rebellion spread!—so sure is there ordained to that

the [d]time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

And Abner the son of Ner went out, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, from Mahanaim unto [e]Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out; and they met together by the pool

[d] *cf.* Heb. 2. 8 with Matt. 25. 31.

[e] *cf.* Josh. 9. 3, etc., with ch. 21. 1, 2.

which is of God a time of patience and of apparent failure. In each day of God there is an evening first and then a morning; for God is a God of resurrection.

David's reign of seven years and six months in Hebron is just about the length of that interval of time,— the last week of Daniel's seventy,— which intervenes between the removal of the Church to be with Christ, and His appearing openly as Son of man to take the kingdom. It is scarcely the place here to argue that such a period there is,— the broken off "end of the [Jewish] age" (Matt. xxiv.), and earth's harvest-time, the crisis of the conflict between good and evil, the time of preparation for millennial blessing: every way, therefore, of such prophetic importance that we cannot wonder to find prophecy in fact full of it, as it is. It is the time in which arises *the* Antichrist, the culmination of the "many antichrists" that have preceded him (1 John ii. 18–22). This would harmonize with such a meaning, therefore, in Ishbosheth. During this time Christ has actually begun His reign, but not at Jerusalem, and Hebron and Judah might represent an acknowledgment of Him as the King by a remnant of Israel, before the time in which the nation at large shall acknowledge Him.

During this time conflict also will go on between the servants of the true King and of the false: Mahanaim will indeed characterize the rival kingdom. The place of strife, Gibeon, seems also significant. If Gibeon, "the pit of suffering for iniquity" (Josh xviii. 25, *n.*), remind us of the Cross, the Cross has been ever the battlefield—Helkath-hazzurim, "the place of sharp swords," between faith and unbelief, the place of victory in the end for David. For it is the Lamb slain, who is the lion of Judah; and as the Lamb He has title over the world. (Rev. v. 6, 7.) Abner, the false pretension to self-competency of knowledge is easily seen as the leader on the one side; but Joab, on David's, is not such an one as we look for here, or, at least, so we should think at first sight. Who and what, then, is this Joab?

Joab is usually taken to be a contracted form of Jehoab, "Jehovah is Father." It is difficult to separate the man, such as we see him in the history,— crafty, self-seeking, unscrupulous, the murderer of men more righteous than himself, from any typical significance of history, so as to imagine any congruity in such a name. Yet God can overrule men and things so as to work out His good by that which is evil,— the evil being in the minds of others, the good in His. And we find shortly, in the history that follows, Amnon, "faithful," Absalom, "father of peace," Adonijah, "my Lord is Jah," acting in most distinct and undoubted contradiction to their names. Thus Joab would not stand alone in this. On the other hand, as the commander of all David's forces, there could not, it would seem, be a more suited name than "Jehovah is Father." Was it not Christ's mission on earth to declare the Father's name? Do not His people rally joyfully, triumphantly, under the inspiration of that revelation, "Jehovah is the Father"? And so will it be in that day also, when in the place in which it was said to Israel, "Ye are not my people, there they shall be called the sons of the living God." (Hos. i. 10.)

With this meaning, also, it is in striking correspondence that Joab is the son of Zeruiah, and that this last word means "balmy"; or rather, one would say, "the balm of Jah." The exact substance to which the word was applied in Scripture is still disputed, but its use as a sovereign remedy for wounds, itself being obtained by a wound in the tree from which then the precious sap flowed out, is not disputed. Nor can we fail to find here once more the image of the Cross. That for us, or for any, Jehovah is Father, is, as we own adoringly, the

of Gibeon. And they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said unto Joab, Let the young men now arise, and [f]play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. And there arose and crossed by number twelve of Benjamin [who pertained] to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and [thrust] his sword in his fellow's side, and they [g]fell down together. And the place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is by Gibeon. And the battle was very sore that day; and Abner was [h]routed and the men of Israel before the servants of David.

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel was as light of foot as one of the gazelles in the field. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and as he went he turned neither to the right nor to the left from following after Abner. And Abner looked behind him and said, Art thou Asahel? And he said, I am. And Abner said unto him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay hold of one of the young men, and take thee his armor. But Asahel would not turn from following him. And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: why should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? But he refused to turn aside; and Abner [i]smote him with the hinder end of his spear in the belly; and the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there and died in the same place. And it came to pass that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

And Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner, and the sun went down when they came to the hill of Ammah, that is before Giah on the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of a hill. And Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour forever? Knowest thou not that it will be [j]bitterness in the latter end?

f *cf.* Jas. 4.1.

g *cf.* Gal. 5. 15.

h ch. 3. 1.

i ch. 3. 27. ch. 4. 6.

j *cf.* Judges 21. 2, 3. Isa. 9. 19–21. *ctr.* Isa. 11. 13.

fruit of the Cross,— of which how constant are the memorials in these precious types!

Thus the captains on either side seem plain, and they meet with their respective hosts at the pool of Gibeon,— literally, and strikingly once more, the "*blessing*" of Gibeon, the "living water" issuing from the Cross, with regard to which the combatants still find themselves on opposite sides. In the conflict following they fall of both parties: but with what different significance we must interpret this! Christ's servants have fallen, many; but death has not harmed them: on their adversaries the shadow of death is other and deeper, for they have rejected the Lord of life.

Three sons of Zeruiah are in the battlefield. The second is Abishai, whose name means "father (or source) of gift." This, under the number of service,

how long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? And Joab said, As God liveth, if thou hadst not spoken, then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. And Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more; and they fought no more. And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah, and passed over Jordan, and went through all the broken country, and came to [k]Mahanaim. And Joab returned from following Abner, and gathered together all the people, and there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin and of Abner's men so that three hundred and sixty men died. And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father which is at Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and came to [l]Hebron at break of day.

3. (III. 1-5.) David's marriages, and their fruit.

[3]And there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David waxed [m]stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. And unto David were [n]sons born in Hebron: and his first-born was [o]Amnon, of [p]Ahinoam the Jezreel-

[k] ver. 12. *ctr.* Gen. 32. 1, 2.

[l] ver. 1. 1 Sa. 22. 1, 2.
[m] *cf.* Is. 42. 4.
*cf.* Gal. 5. 16-26.
[n] 1 Chr. 3. 1-4. *cf.* Gen. 25. 1-6.
[o] ch. 13. 1, etc.
[p] 1 Sam. 25. 43. 1 Sam. 27. 3.

may speak of the Cross as the inspiring cause of gift offered to God, the homage of a life which has been redeemed by it. While Asahel, the third son, plainly means "God has made" or "done,"—emphasizing God as the worker, as the Cross surely does.

Abner is beaten and driven off, though Asahel perishes at his hand in the pursuit,—a thing which, however much an act of self-defense, has bitter consequences in the near future. Of all this I can say nothing, however.

(iii.) The war goes on, but we have no further incidents of it; only that David's house waxes continually stronger as that of Saul grows weaker. After the manner of an eastern king, we see that David strengthens himself by marriages which the law found no ability to forbid, and in which the self-indulgence of his nature manifests itself. The great sin of his life was thus already preparing, which was to darken with its shadows so much his later days.

But this does not affect the typical meaning, as has just now been insisted. The moral lesson is fully enforced and inheres in the letter of the history, quite apart from the prophetic teaching which the Spirit of God has inwoven into it. At times this last seems to give way indeed to the first, to make prominent the moral: the sin and failure are seen to belong simply to the individual, and to *unfit* him to be, for the moment, in any way suitable to represent any divine thought save that of God's holy judgment; while again sometimes the Spirit seems to refuse to be turned aside from His higher purpose, and the glory of the light streams through, as incapable of corruption or contamination by the evil to and beyond the end of which it looks.

David's sons in Hebron are six, by as many mothers; and as the son represents the father, so they seem to represent the various characters of Christ in His kingly government and the principles of which they are the manifestation, or which occasion their display. We have learnt, too, the guard that numerical symbolism gives, as well as the help yielded by it to interpretation. The narrower the limits we have here, the more certainly shall we find our way. The divine marks cannot be too numerous.

Amnon is David's first-born; and his name, "constant," or "faithful," is

itess; and his second, Chileab, of [q]Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, [r]Absalom, the son of Maacah, daughter of [s]Talmai king of Geshur; and the fourth, [t]Adonijah, the son of Haggith; and the fifth,

[q] 1 Sam. 25. 14–42.
[r] ch. 13. 20, etc. ch's 14–18.
[s] ch. 13. 37.
[t] 1 Ki. 1. 5.

simply enough applicable in this manner, and in harmony with the first place he takes. He is the son of Ahinoam, the "kin of pleasure,"—not exactly "pleasure," for that might seem at least to be in opposition to the underlying principle of constancy which is indicated in the expression, "he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." One may suppose that "*congruity*," what is according to its own nature, is that of which this "constancy" is born, and that this is what is looked for, yea, of prime necessity, in that which "God soweth," or Jezreel. Israel was once, as Isaiah tells us (v. 2), planted as "the choicest vine," but proved wholly untrue to that beginning. When the Lord looked for it to bring forth grapes, it brought forth *wild* grapes. Thus there was no seed yet to sow upon the earth (Hos. ii. 23); but He shall have it: Israel in the latter days shall be true to its new beginning; and shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." (Isa. xxvii. 6.)

Constancy is Christ's, for He is the unchangeable, Himself Jehovah; and such, through all their own unfaithfulness, will Israel prove Him in the days that are at hand.

The second son is Chileab, and the number expressive of service is well filled here with a name that seems to mean "the instrument of the Father." He is the son of Abigail, "father (or cause) of exultation," as Israel will be to Christ, when redeemed and brought out from former relationship, here therefore most suitably and pointedly referred to: "Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite,"—the impious dresser of God's vine. Put together, these names have the very obvious meaning, that the salvation of His own is that which has made Christ the instrument of the Father's will. This salvation, for its complete realization, requires Him on the throne. He is the true Malchishua, whom no Gilboa can overthrow,—the "Saviour-King."

The third son is Absalom, the "father of peace." Here the number may prepare us to expect what is a more inward realization of blessing, and the fruit of the Spirit's work. He is the son of Maachah, "bruising": for "He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa. liii. 5); how surely does the question of peace find for its answer the work of the Cross!

But Talmai the king of Geshur: what can *he* represent? Let us remember only that it is Maachah alone, the "bruising," that has to do with him, and we need not wonder at the Anakite name (Josh. xv. 14). Talmai, "my furrows," has been already read thus as "our own doings"; and these have indeed been that from whence Christ's "bruising" sprang. Thus, though we may not be able to interpret the "king of Geshur" aright, the meaning as a whole is obvious.

The next three sons are more briefly characterized. The fourth, Adonijah, means "my Lord is Jah," and he is the son of Haggith, "festive," one who keeps Jehovah's feast. This, under the number of experience and practical walk, shows us how the taste of Jehovah's grace brings us into subjection to Him as Lord over us; and this is how the Lord's rule is endeared to His own. How precious must it have been to faith in Israel in those days of old, when Jehovah gathered His people, three times in the year, around Himself! Jehovah's feasts were times of gathering thus to and around Himself. Now, much more plainly, He is cultivating intimacy with us; and the more we respond and enter into this, the more will His rule be established over us. The nearer we are to Him, the greater He is to us: must it not be so? The indecent familiarity with God which some regard as intimacy is but an unholy mockery of it. Adonijah is still the son of Haggith.

The fifth son shows his number in his name, Shephatiah, "Jah judges." He

Shephatiah, the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

4. (iii. 6–39.) The defection of Abner, and his end.

4 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong among the house of Saul. And Saul had a concubine; and her name was [u] Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And Ishbosheth* said unto Abner, Why hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? And Abner was very wroth because of the words of Ishbosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, who against Judah am showing [v] kindness to-day to the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with wrong about a woman? So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as Jehovah hath sworn to David, so I do to him, by [w] transferring the kingdom from the house of Saul, and setting up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba! And he could not return Abner a word, because he feared him.

[u] ch. 21. 8.

[v] *ctr.* ch. 9. 1, etc.

[w] 1 Chr. 12. 23.

And Abner sent messengers to David to represent him†, saying, Whose is the land? saying [also], Make thy covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring round all Israel unto thee. And he said, Well, I will make a covenant with thee; but I require one thing of thee, namely, that thou shalt not see my face except thou bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face. And David sent

* The name is absent from nearly all the Hebrew copies, but is found in all the versions, except the Chaldee, and is evidently required.
† Literally, "in his place."

is the son of Abital, "father (or source) of cover," or "protection." The thought is simplicity itself; and this is what true judgment is appointed for,—what, when judgment shall return to righteousness, it will be found to give, the protection (alas, that it should be needed), of man from man. When Jehovah judges in the earth openly and manifestly, as He will do, how will the earth rest and be secure? Oh, to see the time!

Finally the sixth son gives us the effect of all this in blessing,—Ithream, "the abundance of the people," for "in the multitude of the people is the king's honor." (Prov. xiv. 28.) But this "abundance" implies more than "multitude." Ithream, too, is the "son of Eglah," "heifer," the double type of labor and of fruitfulness; and therefore Eglah is in some special sense denominated "David's *wife*"! Yes, our David has indeed linked himself in an especial way with service,—service in which all fruit is found! Blessed be His name, He has; and a goodly house is this our David has, when the spiritual interpretation is allowed to flash the luster out of an otherwise dull string of names. This, then, is David's house.

(iv.) The history turns now to show us the commencing collapse of Ishbosheth's kingdom. There was but, as we know, one pillar upon which it rested, Abner; and we can gather from elsewhere that the spirit of defection was at work in Israel. Abner now himself heads the defection, and there is no strength nor will to resist on the part of the people. But Abner's motive is no worthy one,

messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, Give me my wife Michal, whom I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. And Ishbosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Phaltiel, the son of Laish. And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. And Abner said unto him, Go, return; and he returned.

And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you; now then do it: for [x]Jehovah hath spoken as to David, saying, By the hand of my servant David will I save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. And Abner spake also in the ears of Benjamin; and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin. And Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men were with him; and David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thy soul desireth. And David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

x 1 Sam. 16. 1-3. Ps. 89. 35-37.

And behold, the servants of David and [y]Joab came from an expedition, and brought in a great spoil with them.

y ch. 2. 13. *cf.* ch. 11. 1.

And Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came unto the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. And Joab came unto the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to [z]mislead thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, even to know all that thou art doing. And Joab went out from David, and sent messengers after Abner, who brought him again from the well of Sirah; but David [a]knew it not. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the middle of the gate, to [b]speak with him quietly, and smote him there in the belly that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. And when David afterward heard it, he said, I and my

z *ctr.* vers. 8-10.

a ver. 37. *cf.* De. 21. 6, 7.

b ch. 4. 6. ch. 20. 9, 10.

and it is not by such means as this that David is to attain the throne of Israel. The hand that prevents it may be more unscrupulous than his own; and the deed done by which it is stopped is treachery and murder. Still, over all this was a righteousness higher than its human instruments. David is feeble, and the sons of Zeruiah strong: every way there seems but contrast with the throne which David's merely typically presents, but is not; and the type seems to lapse here in order to emphasize the more the contrast. Whether that be really so or

kingdom are guiltless before Jehovah forever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner; let it [c]rest upon the head of Joab and on all his father's house, and let there not be cut off from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a crutch, or that falleth by the sword, or that lacketh bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon, in the battle.

[c] 1 Kings 2. 31–33.

And David said to Joab and to all the people that were with him, [d]Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And King David followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept. And the king [e]lamented over Abner, and said,

[d] ch. 1. 11.

[e] ch. 1. 17.

Dieth Abner as a fool dieth?
Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put in fetters:
As a man falleth before wicked men, thou fellest.

And all the people wept again over him. And when all the people came to make David to eat bread while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread or aught else till the [f]sun be down. And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people: and all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is fallen this day in Israel a [g]prince and a great man? And I am this day weak, [though] anointed king, and these men the sons of Zeruiah are [h]too hard for me: Jehovah shall [i]recompense the doer of evil according to his evil.

[f] *cf.* Lev. 15. 5, 6, etc. Judg 20. 26.

[g] ch. 1. 27.

[h] *cf.* ch. 11. 15–25.

[i] 1 Kings 2. 5, 6. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7.

5. (v.) The death of Ishbosheth.

[5]And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became [j]feeble, and all Israel were troubled. And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon a Beer-

[j] ch. 3. 1.

not,—whether it is only ignorance that says so,—we shall surely sometime understand; but it does seem the method of this book to present these alternate glimpses of the glory to come, and of the mere sorrowful history of "man's day," sorrowful even at its best. We shall but too soon come to darker scenes in which David himself will be found the near kinsman that he is to Joab, and the day of the true Anointed be seen to be far off yet.

(v.) The death of Ishbosheth quickly follows that of Abner; and it in some respects resembles his. Commentators have suggested that, in this case also, the blood-vengeance which Joab and his brother had professedly taken for their brother Asahel, was probably at least once more the pretext. Baanah and Rechab, the slayers of Ishbosheth, were Beerothites, and belonged therefore to one of those Canaanite cities originally leagued with Gibeon, and with it having made peace with Israel by fraud. These Saul had sought to slay, in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah (ch. xxi. 1, 2), and had in fact slain some. Whether Beeroth had suffered at this time we know not; but we learn in this

othite, of the children of Benjamin: for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin. And the Beerothites fled to [k]Gittaim, and have been sojourners there unto this day.

[k] *cf.* Neh. 11. 31–33.

And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was [l]lame of his feet: he was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled; and it was so, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

[l] ch. 9. 3, 13.

And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day, to the house of Ishbosheth; and he was taking his midday sleep. And they came thither into the midst of the house, fetching wheat; and they [m]smote him in the belly; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. When they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bed-chamber, and they smote him and slew him and beheaded him, and took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all the night. And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, who sought thy life; and Jehovah hath this day [n]avenged my lord the king of Saul and his seed. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite and said unto them, As Jehovah liveth who hath [o]redeemed my soul out of ev-

[m] ch. 2. 23. ch. 3. 27. ch. 20. 9, 10. *ctr.* Ju. 3. 21.

[n] 1 Sam. 26. 8, 9.

[o] 1 Kings 1. 29.

place that for some cause "the Beerothites had fled to Gittaim," and were still sojourning there. It is quite natural to put these things together; and if so, to understand that there might be special enmity on the brothers' part to Saul's house on this account. But if so, the history gives no plain proof of such connection; though, *if* it were so, Joab's unpunished deed might have encouraged theirs. But they are mistaken, and fleeing to David with the head of the unhappy king, find summary judgment at his hands.

This is, at best, but history. Have we any sign in it of deeper meaning? In connection with Ishbosheth as a possible type of Antichrist, the circumstances of his death are among the things of which I have spoken as difficulties in accepting this. Antichrist is destroyed only at the coming of the Lord, and with the "beast" or head of the Gentile empire, is cast alive into the lake of fire. Yet here the names have apparent significance which (as realizing their constant value elsewhere) cannot but make one pause and question.

Beeroth we have already had among the cities of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25), and taken it as significant of the "wells" of salvation out of which the redeemed "with joy draw water." Rimmon, the "pomegranate" is a figure of the fruitful and many-seeded word of God (compare p. 138, *n.*). Baanah, "in answer," son of Rimmon, would speak naturally of something sent in response to prayer, thus the fruit of the word which had awakened faith; while Rechab, "rider," is used to designate that "upper millstone" which is several times found in connection with destructive judgment from the Lord's hand (Judges ix. 53, Matt. xviii. 6, Rev. xviii. 21). If, therefore, we take these two together we have judgment inflicted in answer to prayer and according to the Word, which is itself pictured as the sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of the mouth of the white-horsed Rider, with which He smites the nations (Rev. xix. 15). Nay, according to the Hebrew also, as we have seen, "millstone" and "Rider" are one!

ery strait, when one told me, saying, [p]Behold, Saul is dead, thinking he brought good tidings, I took hold of him and slew him in Ziklag to give him recompense for his tidings; how much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood at your hand, and destroy you from the earth? And David commanded his young men, and they slew them and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up at the pool at Hebron. And they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

[p] ch. 1. 5-16.

The throne set up, in accord with the divine decree.

SUBDIVISION 3. (2 Sam. v.–ix.)

*David in the fullness of power and glory.*

(V., VI.)

1. (V. 1–16.) King in Zion over united Israel.

1. [1](*a*)AND [q]all the tribes of Israel came to David to Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy [r]bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, it was [s]thou who leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt [t]tend my people Israel, and thou shalt be captain

*a* (1–5.) The people own Jehovah's choice.

[q] 1 Chr. 11. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 4. 1. *cf.* Zech. 10. 3-7. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 21, 22.

[r] ch. 19. 12. *cf.* Heb. 2. 11-14.

[s] 1 Sam. 18. 5-9.

[t] ch. 7. 8. Ps. 78. 70-72. *cf.* Is. 40. 11.

If, moreover, we remember the Lord's parable of the unjust judge (Luke xviii.), we shall realize very clearly how the final judgment of the earth, which includes Antichrist and his followers, comes "in answer" to the prayer of God's elect, the groans of suffering saints which have gone up to Him so long from a world whose "prince" is Satan and not the One who made it. Certainly in all this there is a congruity, a fitting together of things, which one cannot hastily dismiss because of apparent incongruity elsewhere. Let it be but a flash of light which expires again in darkness, still even a flash of light may be a true revelation. At least it is well for the reverent student of Scripture to have before him what materials can be given for the founding of judgment; and so we must leave it.

It may be well, also, to remark that Ishbosheth's evident weakness of character is no conclusive proof that he could not be such a type as has been suggested. The wisest, strongest, most self-assertive of creatures, what is he before God his Maker? And this is often insisted on in the types themselves, as we have seen. The moral character of a typical person, also, has often apparently little or nothing to do with the place he fills in this way. Joab, and some noted ones among the sons of David are proofs near at hand of the truth of this.

SUBD. 3.

What follows in the next subdivision, though most certainly a picture of a glorious day to come, is yet but a gleam of light also, and no more. What earthly history could furnish any more stable one of the reign of the divine-human King? If past or present could furnish more than this, it would not be the unique wonder and glory that it is. Ah, no! We may be sure that the clouds will soon return after the sun. And so it is. The man after God's own heart falls from his proud position, all the lower for the height from which he falls. Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah, become but the living contradiction of what their names express. And so all mere human glory passes, to leave only the harp of prophecy to take up the broken notes of songs that have been, and weave them into a harmonious anthem of a joy that yet shall be.

But let us seek to possess ourselves of what is here, remembering that even typically it is only half the story of that glorious reign, which we must go on to the books of Kings and Solomon to find completed. Here we have the establishment of the kingdom, there its after-character; here Melchizedek in the signif-

over Israel. And all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah, and they [u] anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, [and] he reigned [v] forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

[u] ch. 2. 4.

[v] 1 Chr. 29. 27.

b (6–12.) David smites the Jebusites and builds Zion.

(*b*) And the king and his men went to [w] Jerusalem, unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. And they spake unto David, saying, Thou shalt not come in hither, except thou take away the [x] blind and the lame; as much as to say, David shall not come in hither. But David took the stronghold of [y] Zion: the same is

[w] Josh. 15. 63.

[x] *cf.* Is. 36. 8, 9.

[y] *cf.* Ps. 2. 6, etc.

icance of his name as "king of righteousness," there the "king of Salem, that is, king of peace"; here, therefore, the man of war, though far from being merely that. But as "judgment shall return to righteousness," so, conversely, righteousness shall return to judgment. The kingdom will be a display of power such as the world has never witnessed; the king, the "lion of the tribe of Judah"; the sceptre, a "rod of iron." And this indicates, indeed, the "regeneration" of the earth (Matt. xix. 28), when righteousness shall *reign;* but not the "new" state, in which righteousness shall "dwell." (2 Pet. iii. 13.) The millennium is the last of earthly dispensations, not the fixed eternal blessedness beyond. The millennium has an end; and that which has its end and passes away shows by that fact its imperfection. Still the hand that rules lacks no element of perfection; and the end of the millennium is the subduing of all things to God in such sort that the separate kingdom having attained its purpose, all things can be delivered up into the hands of God the Father, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 24–28.)

*Sec. 1.*

There are three sections here: the first showing us the throne of David set up, in accord with and subjection to the divine throne (ch. v., vi.); the second, its establishment and growth under his hand (vii.–viii. 14); the third, its internal administration and character (viii. 15–ix.).

(i., *a.*) To pursue now the story here. What Abner was not permitted to accomplish is now done by the united voice of the people. All the tribes now, as that of Judah before, assemble at Hebron to make David king. They own at last what he had been to them even in Saul's reign, and Jehovah's promise concerning him, so that their acknowledgment of David is a return of heart to Jehovah also. He makes a covenant with them before Jehovah,—it would have spoiled the type to say that *they* made a covenant with *him*,—and they anointed him king over them. Thus it will be when they own Christ their King in days to come.

David is thirty years old when he begins to reign, the time in His days on earth when Christ was anointed and thus came to His title,—"Christ" and "Anointed" being the same thing. It was the recognized time for entering on Levite and priestly service. This 30 is 10 x 3, the number of responsibility multiplied by that of divine manifestation. This is indeed what, whether as King or Priest, He assumes as His task, and nothing less could have accomplished anything for man. Forty years David reigns: for, as we know, the millennial reign he represents is not the eternal state, and *is*, therefore, as dispensational, a time of testing for man still. As to the other numbers I have no knowledge of their meaning.

(*b.*) The taking of Zion follows immediately after the anointing; and Zion becomes the city of David, permanently associated with his name. Not only so,

the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, and reacheth the watercourse, and the lame and the blind, hated of David's soul,—Therefore they say, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about, from Millo and inward. And David went on and waxed [z]great; and Jehovah the God of hosts was [a]with him.

And [b]Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar-trees, and carpenters and masons; and they built David a house. And David [c]knew that Jehovah

z ch. 3. 1.
a *cf.* Gen. 39. 2.
b 1 Kl. 5. 1, etc. 1 Chr. 14. 1, 2.
c *cf.* 1 Sam. 16. 1.

it is named in Scripture as the place of the divine choice and abode. David, as we find presently, brought the ark to Zion; and in the 132d psalm, in answer to the prayer, "Arise, Jehovah, unto thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength," the divine answer is, "Jehovah has chosen Zion: He hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." The royal throne and the divine throne are thus in the same place, although they may also be distinguished as by Micah, for whom Zion and the mountain of the house have their separate designation. (Micah iii. 12.)

The name Zion is generally given as "sunny"; but it may just as well signify "fixed." Either sense may be quite appropriate; while the last connects more plainly with what the voice of the Lord has declared regarding it. In contrast with Ephraimitic Shiloh, and consequent upon the failure of the nation and the priesthood there, Zion with David himself are emphatically marked out as objects of Jehovah's choice, in the seventy-eighth psalm: grace manifests itself thus amid the ruin, to the people of God.

But again the Jebusite, the "treader-down," has been at work, and the Lord used the term to express the condition of Israel's city during the times of Gentile supremacy: "Jerusalem shall be *trodden down* of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 24.) Thus the Jebusite period has come back, and will last until the true David shall come in power. But what is that which has maintained Jebusite dominion over the place of Israel's and Jehovah's throne? But one answer is possible here: it is sin which alone can have done so, the sins of God's people themselves. And so inveterate has sin proved in their case, that the Jebusite may seem justified in his taunt, "*Except thou take away the blind and the lame*, thou shalt not come in hither," as much as to say, "David shall not come in hither." Here is, indeed, the real question. Blind has Israel been as to all God's dealings with them: lame, for any walking in paths to which the voice of God for so many generations has been calling them! Well might it seem as if their doom were settled now, and their hope gone. Yet the very name of Zion is a perpetual reminder of promise that abides and which will be fulfilled yet in David's victory. God has said of Zion, "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it": it is the "fixed" place of His abode.

The smiter of the Jebusite must smite, therefore, the blind and the lame, and reach the watercourse, the stream of living water. Let us note, however, that in the text the order of the two latter is inverted: the watercourse is the way of reaching the blind and the lame, as spiritually it surely is. It is remarkable that it has been found quite recently that by the watercourse (by its subterranean channel) the place of the citadel can yet be, though with difficulty, reached. Thus nature bears testimony with Scripture still. David, therefore, takes the stronghold and dwells in it, and builds it up anew. And he goes on and becomes great, for the God of hosts is with him: the higher kingdom and the lower are now united.

Following this we have the first brief notice of Hiram, in which we find a Gentile power greeting and sending aid to the king of Israel. "The daughter

had established him to be king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

c (13-16.) More marriages, etc.

(*c*) And David took him [d]more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron, and there were yet sons and daughters born to David. And these are the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem: Shammua, and Shobab, and [e]Nathan, and [f]Solomon, and Ibhar, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, and Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet.

d *ctr.* Deut. 17. 17.

e *cf.* Zech. 12. 12. *cf.* Lk. 3. 31.

f ch. 12. 24.

of Tyre is" here "with a gift." But this is to find more prominence and significance in the day of Solomon.

(*c.*) There are still more marriages contracted by David, and sons and daughters born to him in Jerusalem. Eleven are named, but without mention of their mothers. There are but two of whom we find anything recorded afterwards, and only one in the present history. None the less must there be purpose in their enumeration here.

Of these eleven sons, judging by their numerical significance, there are two series, 4 and 7; and this is confirmed by 1 Chron. iii., where we find that the first four were all sons of Bathshua or Bathsheba: the latter means "daughter of the oath"; the former "daughter of salvation." But the two are one, as Zacharias' song declares: "the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered from the fear of our enemies, might serve Him without fear." Notice that, with one exception, the names of mother and children are practically here:—

1. Shammua, "heard," or "obeyed":—"might serve Him."
3. Nathan, "he has given":—"that *He* would grant unto us."
4. Solomon, "peaceful":—"that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear."

One name only remains unaccounted for in the song, and that the history accounts for fully. It is the second name, Shobab, "turning back," which the cry of the Psalms acknowledges as God's work: "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." (Ps. lxxx. 19.) Altogether it is clear, therefore, that these four names express, as Bathsheba's sons should do, the fruits of the "covenant of promise": and this is also what a *first* series, as such, might express. They show us Christ as "Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8), and that in the full character of One who has now "the government upon His shoulder." (Isa. ix. 6.) All this is in perfect keeping.

The remaining seven sons seem to give the testimony borne by that salvation which the people experience; and this is a great point: we are thus "in the ages to come" to "show forth the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 7.) This reflex influence of His work is thus a ministry of grace to the whole universe; and the number of perfection, 7, is exactly the number to express this. We may be sure, however, that *we* shall be able but poorly to give even the outlines here.

The first son now is Ibhar, "election," or "He chooses." The fountain of all blessing is in God Himself, in His will alone. This is evidently the fundamental necessity, if He is to be glorified at all. What is merely casual, or what is otherwise produced, we cannot trace to Him, cannot glorify Him for: this needs no argument.

The second son is Elishua, "my God is salvation": the method as well as the will is from Him. It is the blessedness of the gospel that God is thus exalted in it.

The third son, Nepheg, "sprout," shows the activity of life, and therefore of the Spirit of life. Thus the subjective work in the soul is also His,—the internal work is a salvation, as well as the sin-bearing work of the cross.

2. (17-25.) Conflict with the Philistines.

[2]And the [g]Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, and all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard it, and went down to the [h]stronghold. And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David [i]inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt thou give them into my hand? And Jehovah said unto David, Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into thy hand. And David went to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there, and said, Jehovah hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, like a water-burst: therefore he called the name of the place Baal-perazim. And they left there their [j]images, and David and his men took them away.

And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of Jehovah, and he said, Thou shalt [k]not go up:

[g] ch. 21. 15, etc.
[h] 1 Sam. 24. 22.
[i] ch. 2. 1. ver. 23.
[j] *cf.* Judges 8. 21-27. *ctr.* 1 Sam. 4. 11.
[k] *cf.* ver. 19. *cf.* Acts 16. 6-10.

The fourth son, Japhia, is "lustrous, shining," the *creature* clothed with the glory of the light, the reflection of that which has shone upon it. Christ Himself is the pledge and assurance of this, and by occupation with Him it is that it is produced. In it we are still in the weakness of creaturehood, receptive merely: the experience on our part is of what He is. And what a testimony to His grace that He can thus stoop, in the delight of His love, to glorify the objects of His choice!

The next three names all speak directly of God: first—

Elishama, "God heareth": the creature, thus laid hold of by His love, is for Himself; and, having heard His creative voice, is privileged to respond and be heard again. Thus the joy of such intercourse begins, no more to end, and—

Eliada, "God knoweth," carries it on to full communion. For such "knowing" is approbation, as when the "Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous; and *hearing* with such knowledge implies the victory found over the evil that has brought in distance between the soul and Him, as it does also the nearness bred of likeness. And of such victory the last name seems now to remind us—

Eliphelet, "my God is escape," or complete deliverance. How the complete end gained will emphasize that escape! All words are utterly feeble here.

(ii.) We have next David's conflict with the Philistines, Israel's constant enemies from the times of the judges, and who had given Saul his final overthrow. David, on the other hand, gains two great victories, each of which has surely its lesson for us. In each case they "spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim," the giants with whom we find them so much associated, and who give a monstrous, satanic character to them. When man looms large, even heathenism imagines its God-defying Titans, if these are not rather the distorted traditions of true history. David, in meeting them, clings to God and to His word, and Jehovah breaks forth upon them like a water-burst. In truth that is the way in which the power of error is to be met. When the heavens are opened and pour down their spiritual floods, then the hosts of superstition and formalism are defeated, the blocked channels are cleared, and the barriers reared by ecclesiasticism swept away.

David names the place Baal-perazim, the "place of breaches," or "burstings forth"; and he and his men take away the images of the Philistines, thus returning upon them the captivity of the ark in Samuel's day. But the dumb idols can be treated as the useless lumber that they are, and can make no reprisals.

The second battle is still in the valley of Rephaim; but David is now commanded to make a circuit round the Philistines, and come upon them over against the baca-trees (trees of "weeping"), and the sound of marching in the

make a circuit behind them, and come upon them over against the baca-trees. And it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of [l]marching in the tops of the baca-trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself; for then will Jehovah have gone out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so, as Jehovah had commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba till thou comest unto Gezer.

3. (vi.) The ark brought to Zion.

[3]And again David [m]gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him, from Baale of Judah, to [n]bring up from thence the ark of God, who is called by the Name,—the name of Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth between the cherubim. And they set the ark of God upon a [o]new cart, and brought it out of the

*l cf.* Ex. 13. 21. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 14.

*m* 1 Chr. 13. 5-14.

*n* 1 Kl. 8. 1. Ps. 80. 1. Ps. 132.

*o cf.* 1 Sam. 6. 7.

tops of the trees would show him when to attack, Jehovah having gone out before him. The baca-trees are said to be so called from exuding a tear-like sap wherever a leaf is torn from them. Can these weeping trees be a symbol of how the life of Christ is manifested as to the present state of things in sorrowing, not rejoicing?—this thus revealing the Lord as against the world-church, which suffers not with Him, but reigns?

These two battles would show us, then, the twofold controversy between Christ and the modern Philistinism which is against His Spirit in its dry form and externalism, and against His sympathies in its contentment with a world that crucified Him. Thus it cannot come into blessing, but must be swept away. David smites his enemies, therefore, from Geba to Gezer, as judgment from the Lord will come upon that which exalts itself and is in independence of Him. (See p. 66, *n.*)

(iii.) And now we have the ark established in its place in connection with the throne in Zion; not, indeed, its full place,—the temple could not yet be built, nor by David: the reason of which we shall find in the next chapter. But the ark is the throne of the Lord; and it must be shown that the throne upon earth is in accord with and in subjection to the higher throne. Thus David becomes but a servant in the presence of the ark.

Yet servant as he really desires to be, he makes a great mistake, which involves serious consequences. It is strange, indeed, that, in a matter such as he had now before him, David should neither inquire of God, nor think of the directions given in the law as to the carriage of that with which it was known that God had been pleased so intimately to connect the manifestation of His presence. It is stranger still, and reveals sadly the state of things in Israel, that of all those set apart to the service of the sanctuary, there was no priest or Levite to inform a well-intentioned king regarding the prescribed way of acting. Terribly had the Philistines suffered for dishonor done the ark. Terribly had the men of Beth-shemesh suffered. Yet the Philistines' own expedient—confessedly only that—for ascertaining in the best way they knew whether it was Jehovah's hand that had smitten them, is what David adopts in bringing the ark to Zion! True it was that He had allowed the Philistines to get their lesson in this way; and this, there can be little doubt, encouraged the adoption of it: but there could be no justification of such imitation. God had spoken: there was the most shameful ignorance or carelessness as to it; and this just where, in the most solemn manner, they were professing to put themselves under His yoke! How could He, in this great object-lesson before the eyes of the whole nation, allow this to be as a precedent for the future, and make light of His own dishonor?

They go beyond the Philistines even, as such imitators generally do. The Philistines had assumed, at least, that if Jehovah were God, the cattle would act

house of Abinadab that was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, [p]led the new cart. And they brought it with the ark of God out of the house of Abinadab that was on the hill; and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel [q]played before Jehovah on all manner of [instruments made of] cypress wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on sistra, and on cymbals. And when they came to a prepared threshing-floor, Uzzah [r]reached forth to the ark of God, and took hold of it, for the oxen [s]shook it. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzzah, and God [t]smote him there for the error; and he died there by the ark of God. And David was displeased because Jehovah had broken out against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was [u]afraid of Jehovah that day,

p *ctr.* 1 Cor. 14. 26–33.
q *cf.* ver. 14. Ex. 15. 20. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.
r *cf.* Acts 21. 20–24.
s *ctr.* 1 Sam. 6. 12.
t *cf.* Lev. 10. 1, 2.
u Ps. 93. 5. *cf.* Acts 5. 11.

obediently to Him without their guidance, and even in contradiction to their own natural instincts. But the Israelites, having committed the ark to the ox-cart, must have Uzzah and Ahio to guide the oxen. They had not faith in their own contrivance, and are already committed to the perilous work of trusting to their own management of difficulties that may arise. Alas, had they not learnt more in all the years that the ark had been in the house of Abinadab? And what, then, does this argue as to them?

Yet all for a while goes well. There are rejoicings and abundant demonstrations of loyalty on the part of the people, till at the prepared threshing-floor the oxen stumble, and Uzzah puts forth his hand and takes hold upon the ark to steady it. Uzzah means "strength": he had not measured himself before God, nor learnt the source of strength. The act revealed what the ark was to him, the habit of a soul ignorant of God and of itself, while most self-conscious. He is smitten; and the "prepared" threshing-floor becomes Perez-uzzah, the "breaking of strength."

It is strange that in the service of the sanctuary one like David should be so more than dull; yet similar things abound with us to-day. The fact of good intention, of a thing, too, right in the main being before the soul, oft hinders even the need being felt of seeking the mind of the Lord or of testing everything by the word of God. If the thing sought be in itself good, why scrutinize methods so severely? How little do we understand the irreverence that lurks under the appearance of honest devotedness, where man's wisdom is assumed competent to think for Him, or man's strength competent to work His will! How often thus we have our Uzzahs smitten, just when we imagine our service must be accepted of Him!

Then comes the reaction upon this vain confidence: "David was afraid of Jehovah that day, and said, How shall the ark of Jehovah come to me?" So we pass from one extreme to the other; and in proportion to the buoyancy of our first confidence is apt to be the depth of our despair. The consciousness of having sought to do the Lord's will in that which has turned out so unhappily shrouds His dealings with us in gloom and mystery. Where we expected to find the signs of gracious acceptance and approval, on the other hand we have been smitten by Him. And how shall we stand before a God like this?

Yet the matter is simple, as we have seen. How could He accept the complete setting aside of His word, the adoption of Philistine methods and worse, where He had plainly intimated His will?—and this done in the most public way, and by the whole body of His people? "If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile," is the principle that applies here. The desire to serve Him is ever precious to Him, and yet there may be that in the service which He can

and said, How shall the ark of Jehovah come to me? And David would not remove the ark of Jehovah unto him to the city of David, but David carried it aside to the house of [v]Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of Jehovah remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite

[v] *cf.* 1 Sam. 17. 4.

only testify against. Oh that the church of God would listen to this voice to-day, amid the innumerable self-imagined plans whereby it is sought to serve God, but whereby His word is improved upon and supplemented until it is lost and set aside, and His name dishonored in the very offering we bring to Him.

But can we define more closely the special form of evil that is presented here? What does the ark of God upon the ox-cart speak of precisely? The ark was the throne of God in Israel: He dwelt, or had His seat, between the cherubim; there the glory rested, and thence the voice of the Lord gave forth its utterances. The dictates of this throne were addressed to men, to a redeemed people, separated from the apostasies of the nations round to know and serve Him alone, as alone worthy to be served, His service not slavery but the most ennobling freedom. As His people they had been brought out of darkness into light, out of debasing impurity into "holiness of truth," the reproach of Egypt rolled away from them. Hence the only suited carriage for the ark was upon the shoulders of the Levites, the willing yoke-bearers of His glorious chariot of salvation. Redeemed men, subject to Himself alone, are still those who occupy a place of which that in Israel was but a type, a shadow. To these He has in His precious grace committed Himself, that their willing hearts may bear Him through the world. To them He still says, "Take my yoke upon you: my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

The ox-cart was a human invention, in place of this. It was dead machinery instead of living service. At least there was no intelligence, no moral principle, no spiritual consecration in it. The beast might and did, according to this idea, need a director; and this was proved in the most unhappy way in Uzzah: the man was more out of his place than the beast was; and the bolt of divine judgment fell on him. Directors and machinery are common enough to-day, whereby the work of the Spirit is assumed by those who heedlessly intrude into His place; and *men*, alas, oftentimes are compelled to become machines, their consciences subjected to other heads than Christ, their work made task-work, often the "burden" anything but "light." Let honest hearts apply this, as they surely may.

The ox is indeed the type of the laborer in the Word, as the apostle assures us (1 Cor. ix. 8–10); but the ox treading out the corn is a totally different thing from bearing the ark of the Lord. The *substitution of beast for man* is what is here in question; and thus the beast must be taken *as beast*,—as implying what, if man come into it, speaks of degradation for him. This is perfectly clear. And yet the very threshing-floor to which the apostle and the law in Deuteronomy refer is that which would appear to be the occasion of the catastrophe. The blind animal instincts cause the oxen to swerve aside. The leader, seeing no more than the machine, supposes all to be in danger; and now the judgment falls.

Thus for the present the ark is not brought to Zion, but carried aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. The names here are so remarkable, both in themselves and in their connection, that one cannot but believe them to be designed to attract our notice and furnish a spiritual lesson. Obed-edom, as we see by the reference to the blessing on him elsewhere (1 Chron. xxvi. 4, 5), was a Korahite Levite, and thus his house was not unsuited for the reception of the ark. Yet his name means "servant of Edom" (typically of the flesh), and his place of former residence or birth, most probably the latter, is Gath, the "wine-press,"—type, as we know, of divine wrath.* That we were indeed "by nature

*Gath-*rimmon* has been suggested, as being a Kohathite city of the tribe of Dan; but why should he not have been born in Gath, the Philistine city? This, while surely possible, would be much more likely to mark him as an individual.

three months; and Jehovah [w]blessed Obed-edom and all his house. And it was told King David, saying, Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that is his, because of the ark of God; and David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with gladness. And it was so, that when they that [x]bare the ark of Jehovah had gone six paces, he [y]sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before Jehovah with all his might; and David was girded with a linen [z]ephod. And David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with [a]shouting and sound of trumpet. And as the ark of Jehovah came into the city of David, [b]Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before Jehovah; and she [c]despised him in her heart. And they brought in the ark of Jehovah, and set it in its place in the midst of the tent that David had spread for it; and David offered up [d]burnt-offerings before Jehovah, and [e]peace-offerings. And when David had ended offering the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, he [f]blessed the people in the name of Jehovah of hosts. And he [g]distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both men and women, to every one a cake of bread and a measure [of wine] and a raisin-cake. And all the people departed, every one to his house. And David returned to bless his household. And Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David, and said, How [h]glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, It was before Jehovah, who [i]chose me rather than thy father and all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of Jehovah, over Israel; yea, I have played before Jehovah. And I will be yet [j]more vile than this, and will be low in mine own eyes; and of the handmaidens of

[w] Num. 6. 22-27.

[x] Num. 3. 30, 31. Num. 7. 6-9.
[y] *cf.* Num. 7. 15-17. 1 Ki. 8. 5.
[z] 1 Sam. 22. 18. *cf.* Zech. 6. 12, 13.
[a] Ezr. 3. 11. 1 Sam. 4. 5.
[b] ch. 3. 13.
[c] Gen. 16. 4. *cf.* Gal. 4. 29, 30. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.
[d] Lev. 1. 3, etc. 1 Ki. 8. 64.
[e] Lev. 3. 1, etc. 1 Ki. 8. 63.
[f] *cf.* Lev. 9. 22, 23. 1 Ki. 8. 55-60. *cf.* Ps. 85. 1, 9, 10.
[g] Neh. 8. 10-12. *cf.* Ps. 132. 15.
[h] ver. 16. *cf.* 1 Sam. 19. 24.
[i] 1 Sam. 16. 1, 12.
[j] *cf.* Acts 2. 13. with 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.

children of wrath" is no strange thing to be told of any of God's Levites; and the apostle adds (Eph. ii. 3), "fulfilling the desires of the flesh,"—we were Obed-edoms. Thus also we are now Korahites, saved as the children of Korah were in the wilderness, from their father's penalty.

How beautiful it is to see that while David asks, in fear, "How shall the ark of Jehovah come to *me*?" the house of an Obed-edom can receive it, with nothing but blessing! "Jehovah blessed Obed-edom and all his house." How His grace rebukes our unbelieving fears with blessing! And once again David is encouraged to bring up the ark to the city of David; but there are now those that bear the ark: God's word kept, everything prospers.

Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings are the due accompaniment, for without that which these signify there could be no dwelling of God with man. David himself, girded with a linen ephod, dances before the ark. He is now the link between Israel and God, and in glad subjection to the higher kingdom. At the end he blesses the people, therefore, in the name of Jehovah of hosts, and distributes to them all portions. We see the shadow of the Melchizedek king,

whom thou spakest, of them shall I be had in honor. And Michal the daughter of Saul had [k] no child to the day of her death.

(VII.-VIII. 14.)

Establishment and growth of David's kingdom. 1.(viii.) The promise of perpetuity to his line.

2. [l] And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and Jehovah had given him [l] rest round about from all his enemies, that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of God dwelleth within [m] curtains. And Nathan said unto the king, Go, [n] do all that is in thy heart; for Jehovah is with thee. And it came to pass that night that the [o] word of Jehovah came unto Nathan, saying, Go and say unto my servant, unto David, Thus saith Jehovah, Shalt thou build for me a house to dwell in? for I have [p] not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt even to this day, but have been walking in a tent and in a [q] tabernacle. In all [places] wherein I have walked among all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the rulers of Israel whom I commanded to tend my peo-

k *ctr.* Gen. 11. 30.

l 1 Chr. 17. 1, etc.

m Ex. 26. 1.

n *cf.* 1 Kl. 8. 18.

o *cf.* Acts 9. 13–17.

p 1 Kl. 8. 16.

q Josh. 18. 1. Judges 18. 31.

the opposite of Saul and his independence, whom we find reproduced in the pride of his daughter. But Michal is therefore without children to the day of her death. The spirit of independence is, of necessity, barren: that of service is the truly royal spirit, as surely as "the less is blessed of the better."

*Sec. 2.*

The next section shows us the establishment and growth of David's kingdom: on the divine side, the promise of perpetuity to his line,—an absolute promise, in view of all human instability and failure; on the human side, its extension by the putting down of enemies on every side. The first is not that chronologically merely, but in importance, and the foundation of all the rest.

(i.) David is on his throne and in peace; he has rest from all his enemies round about. He dwells in his house of cedar, and thinks it an unseemly thing that Jehovah's ark should dwell within curtains. We see once more how a man's heart may be right with God, and his thoughts wrong. He discloses his mind to Nathan the prophet, and Nathan at first approves his purpose: "Go, do all that is in thy heart; for Jehovah is with thee." But the word of God is something very different from the best thoughts of the best people; and Nathan has presently a very different word put into his lips by the Lord. Here too the Lord shows David that his thoughts are wrong, spite of all the piety of them, by this conclusive fact, that they had not been formed upon any previous intimation of His will. Can a man think for God? Can we anticipate His mind? It is impossible: all that the most fervent spirit can rightly do is reverently to follow it. Hence David *must* be wrong, and every one else, who would add one jot or tittle to the perfect word of God. How easy, in this way, to decide at once concerning multitudes of thoughts that fill men's minds to-day! And yet how little is such a principle accepted, even with the children of God! "Add not to His words, lest He reprove thee," is as important as "do not diminish": and, indeed, to do the former we must do the latter. Is Scripture able to furnish the man of God "*thoroughly*" and "to *all* good works"? As surely as this is true, so surely must we refuse whatever even man's piety may put forth, if the word of God is not the source of it.

Thus Jehovah says: "Shalt thou build me a house to dwell in? for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, but have been walking in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places wherein I have walked among all the children of Israel, *spake I a word* with any

ple Israel, saying, Why build ye me not a house of cedar? And now thus shalt thou say to my servant David, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I [r]took thee from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be prince over my people, over Israel; and I have been [s]with thee wherever thou walkedst, and have [t]cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thy name [u]great, like the name of the great ones that are on the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will [v]plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and be disturbed no more, neither shall the sons of perversity afflict them any more as formerly, and as since the time that I commanded [w]judges to be over my people Israel; and I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make [z]thee a house. When thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy [y]seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a [z]house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a [a]father to him, and he shall be to me a son. If he commit iniquity, I will [b]chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not [c]depart from him, as I took it from [d]Saul, whom I put away from before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be [e]steadfast forever before thee: thy throne shall be fixed forever.

According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so spake Nathan to David. And King David went in and [f]sat before Jehovah; and he said, [g]Who am I, Lord Jehovah? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this has been little in thine eyes, Lord Jehovah; but thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house to a time [h]far off: and is this the [i]manner of man, Lord Jehovah? And [j]what can David say more unto thee? for thou [k]knowest thy servant, Lord Jehovah. For thy word's sake, and according to

*r* 1 Sam. 16. 11, 12. Ps. 78. 70, 71.
*s* 1 Sam. 18. 14.
*t* ch. 22. 1, 2. Ps. 89. 19–23.
*u* ch. 5. 11, 12. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9–11.
*v cf.* Ps. 80. 8–11. Jer. 24. 5–7. Am. 9. 11–15. Is. 27. 2–6 with Is. 11. 1, etc.
*w* Judges 2. 14–19.
*x* 1 Ki. 11. 38. *cf.* Is. 9 7. Is. 55. 3.
*y* Ps. 89. 84–37. *cf.* Acts 2. 29–36.
*z* 1 Ki. 5. 3.
*a* Ps. 89. 26, 27. *cf.* Heb. 1. 5.
*b* 1 Ki. 2. 4. Ps. 89. 30–33. Jer. 33. 14–17.
*c* 1 Ki. 11. 38, 39. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 32.
*d* 1 Sam. 11. 28, 29. Hos. 13. 11.
*e* 1 Sam. 2. 35. 1 Sam. 25. 28. ch. 23. 5.
*f cf.* 1 Ki. 10. 4–7.
*g* 1 Sam. 18. 18. ch. 9. 8. *cf.* Matt. 8. 8.
*h cf.* Ps. 72. 7, 17.
*i cf.* Rom. 5. 6–8; Is. 55. 8, 9. *j cf.* Is. 38. 15; Ps. 126. 1–3. *k cf.* Jno. 21. 17.

of the rulers of Israel whom I commanded to tend my people Israel, saying, Why build ye me not a house of cedar?"

How fruitful a principle, if we would consider it! And not having its application, as so much else, to the cold and indifferent, for they are not the people who come forward of themselves to build a house to the Lord; but to the earnest and zealous-hearted.

But this does not mean that the earnestness and zeal are not acceptable to God: they surely are. He goes on therefore here, while refusing the offer of David, to give Himself to David an assurance that what *he* had thought to do for Him, Himself would do for David: "also Jehovah telleth thee that *He* will make *thee* a house." A son shall be raised up to him, in whom the kingdom shall be established, and who shall fulfill the desire now in David's heart; and his line shall be continued, and his throne established forever.

Solomon is first in view in this promise, as we know; but Christ the only One

thine [l]own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know it. Wherefore [m]thou art great, Jehovah God: for there is none like thee, nor any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears! And [n]what single nation is there in the earth like Israel thy people, which God went to redeem for a people to himself, even to make him a name, and to do for them* great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people which thou redeemedst to thyself from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? Yea, thou hast established for thyself thy people Israel to be a people for thyself forever; and thou, Jehovah, art become their God. And now, Jehovah God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, fulfill it forever, and [o]do as thou hast spoken. And let thy name be [p]magnified forever, saying, Jehovah of hosts is God over Israel, and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee! For thou, Jehovah of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: wherefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray unto thee this prayer. And now, Lord Jehovah, thou art very God, and thy words are truth, and thou hast spoken of this good for thy servant; and now, let it please thee to bless thy servant's house, that it may be before thee forever; for thou, Lord Jehovah, hast spoken, and with thy [q]blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed forever.

2. (viii.) Extension of the kingdom over the nations round.

[2]And after this it came to pass, that David [r]smote the Philistines, and subdued them; and David took the bridle of the metropolis out of the hand of the Philis-

l *cf.* Eph. 1. 5, 6.
m 1 Ki. 8. 23.
n Deut. 33. 29.
o *cf.* Luke 1. 38.
p Ps. 35. 27.
q *cf.* Ps. 45. 1, 2.
r 1 Chr. 18. 1, etc. 1 Sam. 17. 52.

* In the Hebrew text, "for you,"—a difference of one letter.

in whom it can be properly fulfilled, even to the building of a house for the Lord. The son near at hand is but the shadow of the greater One afar off; and the house made with hands only a brief anticipation of the glorious House against which the gates of hades never shall prevail. Thus we see how the instability of the mere human seed cannot avail to alter the word which has gone out of Jehovah's lips. Chastening with the rod of men would as surely come as the need for chastening on their part; but the house and the kingdom abide forever, as sure as the pledged word that never fails can make it.

The declaration is so plain that there is little to be said about it in such interpretative notes as we are giving here. It is plain that we have such a full declaration of divine grace in a promise which, ministered through David, is the only hope of the world as well, that man's self-righteousness so ready to manifest itself even in a saint, is abashed and humbled. David, from a would-be worker, is brought to sit before God in rest and adoration. Even his prayer is only now, "Do, Lord, what Thou hast said Thou wilt do!" He can suggest nothing, add nothing, to dim the glory of this abundant grace.

(ii.) We are now shown the extension of David's power over the nations round. However great, it is but the faint and passing image of what will be, when the King of glory comes. Still it is a type, and must be read as that; or what great interest is there for us in the list of these powers subdued? Nor is this to set aside the letter, which is only certified to us the more as we see the divine wisdom which has guarded and guided the historian. This verification

tines. And he smote *s* Moab, and measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground: and he measured *t* two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive; and the Moabites became David's servants, bringing gifts. And David smote Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to extend his power to the *u* River. And David took from him a thousand seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David *v* houghed all the chariot-[horses], but reserved of them for a hundred chariots. And the Syrians of *w* Damascus came to succor Hadadezer king of Zobah; and David smote of the Syrians twenty-two thousand men.

*s* Num. 24. 17.
*t* *cf.* Deut. 30. 15, 19.
*u* *cf.* Gen. 15. 18 with Ps. 72. 8.
*v* Josh. 11. 6, 9. *cf.* Deut. 17. 16. *ctr.* 1 Ki. 10. 26–29.
*w* *cf.* ch. 10. 6.

of the outward fact by the manifestation of the inner spirit which gives it vitality and organic place in connection with the whole revelation of God, has been sadly lost sight of through the abuse and contempt of allegorization: that is, of the prophetic character of divine history.

The first conquest is that of the Philistines: "David took the bridle of the metropolis out of the hand of the Philistines." This cannot mean that he took away their dominion over Israel, which was certainly already at an end. It must speak, one would say therefore, of their internal *self*-government, one city having a controlling power over the rest. The loss of this would deprive them of their internal unity, of such coherence as would make them formidable. It is striking to find in Chronicles (1 Chron. xviii. 1) that this metropolis was Gath, whose champion David had long before defeated. And what could have the place among the Philistine cities that Gath, the "wine-press" of wrath would have? Let Goliath be slain, their arms are defeated; let Gath be taken, their strength is prostrate.

The second conquest is that of Moab: "and he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground: and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive; and the Moabites became David's servants, bringing gifts." It is certain that mere *profession* (which Moab represents) will not come to an end at the appearing of Christ: "Strangers shall feign to me; as soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places." So says, prophesying of Another, this very David (2 Sam. xxii. 45, 46); and here there is a line to put to death and to keep alive; but the exposition of this naturally comes elsewhere.

We have now, in the third place, the conquest of Syria, by which the empire of David is extended as far as the Euphrates. And indeed it seems to have been with him a deliberate purpose to take possession of the country as far as the limit of the promise to Abraham (Gen. xv). This seems the real meaning of what even the Revised Version gives as "went to recover his dominion at the River," but which most certainly says nothing of the kind. It is literally "to extend his *hand* to the River." I have merely substituted "power" for "hand," as plainly its force. With this meaning it becomes clear that the expression would rather apply to David than to Hadadezer, as with the other it must read the reverse way. David had no dominion to *recover* at the River, while, on the other hand, the Syrian king's territory was at least close by; and while Hadadezer's extension of his territory *northward* to the Euphrates would hardly have brought him into conflict with David, whose kingdom was to the south, it is quite easy to see that David, coming north to the River, would find the kingdom of Zobah in his way.

The occasion of the attack seems given later as arising out of the Ammonite war. Here we have but a general summary of conquest, hardly chronological. Whatever its historical significance, a spiritual one we have the amplest reason to expect. This career of subjugation and spoil, one can see indeed how another

And David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, bringing gifts. And Jehovah [x]preserved David whithersoever he went. And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass. And Toi king

[x] ver. 14.

witness would be given in it, such as Egypt, the wilderness, and Joshua's victories, had given before, to the power of one true God over the multitudinous and degrading deities of the heathen. A rude hand was needed to break these barriers to the reception of the truth, of which Israel was the divinely ordained depository; and the judgments inflicted by their means was a mercy, after all, which every thinking mind must recognize as that.

Typically we have already traced, to some extent, what Aram or Syria represents (p. 198–200, *n.*). It is man, whom God has exalted in Christ, in His own gracious and wonderful way, but who, on the other hand, by self-exaltation debases himself to his own ruin. This last is what we are made to see in the historical Aram. The world is indeed ever illustrating it in different ways: "man's day" is a day of human aggrandizement with that of which he has robbed God, and of self-exaltation by that with which God's mercy has enriched him. And therefore the day of the Lord must be "upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up, . . . and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." (Isa. ii. 12, 17.)

Aram, the "high," seems even specifically to point out the various qualities of self-exaltation. Aram-naharaim, or Mesopotamia (Aram of the two rivers), like another Egypt, shows us, as already pointed out, that which is bred of the constant stream of mercies by which man is sustained, their continual flow unknown as from those far-off heavens from which they come: so that they can even say, at last, "My river is mine own, and I have made it."

Aram-Rehob or beth-Rehob, near akin to this, speaks of "enlargement," growth of resources, influence, power;—

Aram-Zobah, of establishment, "stability";—

Aram-Dammesek, Syria of Damascus, if we may accept Gesenius as to it, of "activity";—

Aram-Maachah, of "bruising," oppression, the tyranny of power.

There is no need to dwell upon these here. It is easy to understand that the world in this form must be brought down in the day of Christ, and be compelled to yield what it has falsely claimed as its own. Its riches must be dedicated to the Lord; its glory pass to Him who is the "King of glory."

Hadad-ezer (in other places Hadarezer) is a worthy king of Zobah. The variation, slight as it is in Hebrew (the lack of a mere shoulder to a "d" makes it "r,"), I cannot but believe to be designed. Hadar means "glory, honor," and is the more common form; but Hadad is "shouting, noise": *vox et præterea nihil*,—sound, and nothing else. This kind of satire is often found in the changes in Hebrew names. Hadarezer means "glory is help," the first word being perhaps the name of their sun-deity, while certainly there has been always abundant idolatry of this kind among men. He is the son of Rehob, "enlargement," and has a plentiful following, and gold shields upon his servants; but his gold is this time no defense: it is sanctified to the Lord, with much brass from his towns Betah, "security," and Berothai, "my hewings."

Nor can the Syrians of Damascus help: in Damascus itself David puts garrisons. How differently will the world's "activity" manifest itself in the day that our David does this!

Toi, king of Hamath, however, has been in conflict with Hadadezer, and has evidently suffered at his hand. Toi means "wanderer," the very opposite of

of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer; and Toi sent Joram his son unto king David to [y]inquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had had war continually with Toi. And [Joram] brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass. These also did king David [z]sanctify to Jehovah, with the silver and the gold which he sanctified of all the nations which he had subdued: of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

And David made himself a [a]name on his returning from smiting Edom* in the valley of salt, eighteen thousand [men]. And he put garrisons in [b]Edom: throughout Edom he put garrisons: and all they of Edom became David's servants. And Jehovah preserved David whithersoever he went.

(VIII. 15-IX.)

Internal character of David's reign. 1. (viii. 15-18.) The administration of justice.

3. [1]And David [c]reigned over all Israel; and David executed [d]judgment and justice unto all his people. And

y *cf.* Ps. 18. 44, 45.

z 1 Chr. 18. 9–11. 1 Chr. 29. 1–5.

a Ps. 60. Title.

b 1 Ki. 11. 15. Ps 60. 8. 9.

c *cf.* Jer. 23. 5, 6.

d *cf.* Ps. 72. 2.

* In the Hebrew copies here, "Aram," (Syria,) a difference only of the shoulder of a "d," which if lost would make it "r." Syria was not near the valley of salt, which is at the south end of the Dead Sea. The Septuagint reads, "Edom," and 1 Chron. xviii. 12, and Ps. lx., title, evidently speak of the same event.

the stability of Zobah; Hamath is generally taken to mean "inclosure, fortress." Joram, his son's name, I cannot take as the mere equivalent of Jehoram: it signifies "caused to be exalted." The consciousness of instability and wandering prepares the soul for the apprehension of the grace that exalts, and makes the inclosure of sheltering strength most needful to it. Thus the names combine easily, and we need not wonder to find Toi, the "wanderer," seeking David. All the gifts and spoil of the world are consecrated to Jehovah by him: for the kingdom of Christ subdues all to God at last, "that God may be all in all."

Edom comes last for judgment, which, from our knowledge of its spiritual significance, is not difficult to understand. Edom, the old "Adam" nature in man, is the evil hardest and last of all to be subdued. In the barren valley of salt Edom is finally subjugated and garrisoned throughout; and the Edomites become David's servants. As at the beginning we all were Edomites that now know Christ, there need be no difficulty about this. This is the end of the general sketch of the extension of the kingdom. "And God preserved David whithersoever he went."

*Sec. 3.*

We come now to look at the kingdom internally; and we have first the administration of righteousness, and the order established for that; and then, at more length, its *salvation*-character,—of which Mephibosheth is a beautiful illustration.

(i.) United Israel is under his hand, and to all his people judgment and justice are dispensed. This is, above all, the character that David represents to us, as we have seen. Alas, that he fails signally at times in this, we know too; but it is the general character of his reign, and that which he stands for typically; the lessons of his failure we shall find in full elsewhere. Here, for the type's sake, all this is excluded.

As to detail here, we have but the names of those put in charge in their

[e] Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and [f] Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; and [g] Zadok

[e] ch. 20. 23-26.
[f] 1 Ki. 4. 3.
[g] ch. 15. 24-29.

various departments; and if we have not skill to read the names, or refuse this "allegorizing," these will be barren enough, nay, would lead us sometimes in an opposite direction. We already know, and shall more fully as we read on, how different might be the actions of the men from the beauty of their names. But the history is at this point purposely idealized, for it is Christ who is before the mind of the Spirit; and thus His inspired mouthpiece is kept from the intrusion of what would spoil the picture.

Take, for instance, the very first name here in proof; a name of chief importance, if its position counts for anything: what is Joab, the son of Zeruiah, according to his acting in the history? Yet the thought represented by his name is exactly according to its foremost place in this catalogue. Joab means "Jehovah is Father," and as the son of Zeruiah, "balm of Jah," speaks, as we have seen, of the cross as the procuring cause of such relationship being enjoyed. It is striking that here is one of those double meanings which often confirm and throw light upon each other; for Zeruiah may also mean "straitened" or "distressed of Jah": and so in both ways the Cross is indicated.

Joab is over the host: for all the wars of the kingdom of Christ are governed by this one aim, to bring in the *Father's* kingdom. The prayer that He taught His disciples was "*Father*, thy kingdom come!" The iron sceptre having done its work, He will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Thus that which He bids them pray for He Himself accomplishes. For this He puts down all rule and all authority and power. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24–28.) Joab is surely, then, without possibility of contradiction, "over the host."

Secondly: "Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder." The office here intended is not certain, but the word is literally "remembrancer," which might be equivalent to or include that of historian; but would seem, first of all, to be that of king's referee and counselor. Jehoshaphat means "Jehovah has judged," and answers admirably to his office: Jehovah's judgment thus being the rule for guidance at all times. But Jehoshaphat is himself the son of Ahilud, which means "the brother," or "kin of the one born," a blessed and wonderful thought; in this connection how tender an one! that as man is even naturally the "offspring of God," so He is in that sense akin to the feeble creature He has made. His judgments are, indeed, the fruit of this kinship: He remembers this link of His own establishment in all His dealings with them. How should His judgments be thus endeared to us!

Thirdly: we have the priesthood, twofold, embracing the lines of Eleazar and Ithamar both (see p. 298, *n.*), and Eleazar's given the first place in Zadok, a fact which shows the ideal picture that is given us here: for Zadok really only acquired the first place in the beginning of Solomon's reign, after Abiathar had joined the conspiracy of Adonijah. Yet for the type Zadok had to come first,—who, as the "righteous," reminds us from this side of the Melchi*zedek* character of priesthood in Christ. As heir of Eleazar's line, he is also the true representative of the *risen* Priest; while a descendant of Ithamar would have been entirely out of place here.

Zadok is the son of Ahitub, "brother of goodness," as the Lord's priesthood as the righteous One is yet the fruit of his human kinship with us assumed in love.

In the line of Ithamar, where we expect to find "Abiathar the son of Ahimelech," we find instead "Ahimelech the son of Abiathar," and this is supported by 1 Chron. xxiv. 6, where the same inversion obtains. Fausset suggests that father and son had both names, which Mark ii. 26 may in part confirm. Ahimelech means "brother of the king," Abiathar, "father of excellence."

In the fourth place, the scribe's name is Seraiah, "Jah rules."

the son of Ahitub and [h]Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were the priests; and Seraiah was the scribe; and [i]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

2. (Ix.) The salvation side.

[2]And [j]David said, Is there yet any that is left of the [k]house of Saul, that I may show him [l]kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was [m]Ziba: and they called him unto David; and the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the [n]kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, who is [o]lame

h 1 Sam. 22. 20–23.
i ch. 23. 20.
j *cf.* 1 Jno. 4. 10, 19.
k *cf.* 1 Sam. 19. 10. 1 Sam. 23. 14–29. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.
l 1 Sam. 20. 14–17.
m *ctr.* ch. 16. 1–4.
n *cf.* Tit. 3. 4. *cf.* Eph. 2. 7.
o ch. 4. 4. *cf.* Acts 3. 2. etc.

In the fifth we find Benaiah the son of Jehoiada over the Cherethites and Pelethites, or, probably, as Gesenius says, "executioners and couriers." Here again divine names are prominent: Benaiah, "Jah has built"; Jehoiada, "Jehovah knows." Do they show us that the execution of judgment is controlled by His purpose to build up and bless, this building up being the fruit of His own perfect knowledge? All these names, it is evident, speak as with one consent of righteous, wise, and beneficent government; and when it is added that "David's sons were chief rulers"—*cohanim*, the same word as for "priests," but here applied to the representation of another in civil affairs, as the priest in sacred (see vol. i. p. 227, *n.*)—we have only to turn back to the meanings of these sons' names (ch. iii. 1–5, v. 13–16, *n.*) to find a host of witnesses to the character of the kingdom represented here. As has been said, the history is carefully *idealized* that the type may not be marred. When we come to the details of actual history, things will be seen far otherwise; but the Spirit will not be hindered from presenting to us this view of a perfect kingdom, which Christ alone will actually consummate. That to which Scripture uniformly looks on is the glory of Christ.

(ii.) But Christ's kingdom is not simply a reign of *righteousness;* it is emphatically for *salvation.* As in the grand picture of the 72d psalm: "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." This salvation side of the kingdom must now be represented in the picture, or it would not be an adequate representation at all. What worthy idea of God but must take in His *grace?* And so it is, accordingly: we have one of those touching exhibitions of what David himself calls "the kindness of *God,*" with which all Scripture is full. May it wake up our hearts to praise!

"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

How had the house of Saul collapsed, when it was necessary even for David to ask such a question! But a few years since, Saul was the king of Israel, able to speak of his power to give fields and vineyards to his followers, and to make them captains of hundreds and of thousands. Now his own place knows him no more; and the one who sits on his throne, and desires to do kindness to his house, does not know where to find a member of it!

Saul had been the enemy and bitter persecutor of David, and this desire is the expression of grace indeed, although, as he says, there is one for whose sake he acts, and to whom he had pledged himself in covenant. But this covenant itself was the fruit of love alone. Jonathan had made no great sacrifice for David,—had not shared his fortunes, nor procured for him any mitigation of his sufferings. But David is faithful to his oath and to his love: he could not have been in any wise the figure even of our David, had he not been so.

of his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.

And King David [p]sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and [q]fell on his face, and did obeisance. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he said, Behold thy servant. And David said unto him, [r]Fear not; for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will [s]restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at [t]my table continually. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a [u]dead dog as I am?

And the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. And thou and thy sons and thy servants shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in [the fruits,] that thy master's son may have food to eat; and Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. And Ziba said unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so will thy servant do.

p *cf.* Luke 15. 4. *cf.* Eph. 2. 17.

q *cf.* Lk. 18. 13, 14.

r *cf.* Is. 43.1. 1 Jno. 4.18.

s *cf.* ch. 19. 29, 30. Lev. 25. 23, 28.

t *cf.* Lk. 15. 22, 23.

u 1 Sam. 24. 14. *cf.* Matt. 15. 27.

His question elicits a reply from a certain Ziba, a servant of Saul's house: "Jonathan has yet a son, who is lame of his feet." And in answer to further inquiry, he learns that he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lodebar. Thus Mephibosheth is introduced to us.

Mephibosheth, in perfect harmony with what we hear from him on this occasion, means "shame out of the mouth." He is the picture of one convicted and self-condemned, impotent and corrupt, as his own figure is, "a dead dog." His impotence is still further emphasized in his lameness,—lame of both feet. In his infirm and solitary condition, he is a perfect contrast with the servant Ziba, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants, but who is still himself, as is the legalist ever, a servant only; and with that curious ambiguity about his name, which Scripture uses so often and so forcefully; for this may mean "planted," or as two words, "drought comes": and this is the legal contingency.

Mephibosheth is of the house of the failed Saul, and yet the son of Jonathan, whose name, "Jehovah has given," reminds us of the unrepenting call and gifts of God, who calls still the "weak things of the world," yea, the base, the despised, and "things that are not," so that he "out of whose mouth" is the confession of his "shame" is still the Mephibosheth, the heir of the covenant of grace.

He is found in the house of Machir, "one who recollects," (and so comes really to himself,) the son of Ammiel, of "the people of God," in Lodebar, where "the word is his"*—applies itself, and comes home to him. Brought into David's presence, he hears the word of restoring grace that enriches him, and bows his heart in gratitude. His place is henceforth to be at the king's table, as one of his sons. This is the communion to which God brings us as His people; while the mere servant remains the servant. How beautiful in its simplicity is the repetition at the close of this story, "Mephibosheth dwelt at Jeru-

* Lo-debar is given in the lexicons as "no pasture," and might translate the word in ch. xvii. 27, but not here, if we allow the ordinary reading, where twice over the "lo" means "to him" or "his." The spiritual meaning seems to agree with this.

And Mephibosheth [said the king] shall eat at my table as one of the [v]king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micah. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt at Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame in both his feet.

[v] *cf.* Gal. 4. 4–7.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Chap. x.–xii.)

*Failure of David also.*

1. (x.) Beginning in blessing.

*a.* (1–5.) Origin of the war with Ammon.

1 (*a*) AND it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of [w]Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. And David said, I will show [x]kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his [y]father showed kindness unto me. And David sent by the hand of his servants, to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon. And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, [z]Is it in

[w] 1 Chron. 19. 1, etc. *cf.* Judg. 10. 7, etc.
[x] *cf.* ch. 9. 1.
[y] 1 Sa. 11. 1. *cf.* 1 Sa. 22. 3, 4.
[z] *cf.* Matt. 21. 33–41.

salem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame in both his feet."

Thus are saved the poor and needy; thus David shows the "kindness of God"; of which, however, all these things are but the faintest shadows. Yet they remind us of that by which, in the ages to come, He shall "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

SUBD. 4.

The account of David's greatness is, as we have seen, a summary in some respects anticipative of the after-history. The first four sons given as born to him in Jerusalem are sons of Bathsheba, and yet the sorrowful history of their mother has not been given; so also apparently with the account of the victory over Hadadezer. The last seems evidently connected with the Syro-Ammonitish war, which now follows, and with which is interwoven the shameful fall of David himself. The story of this latter begins, therefore, with that of the war, the first successes of which are the preface to it, as the hour of prosperity is so often the prelude to some fleshly manifestation. The fall that seems most sudden is only the witness of decay that has begun before, or at least of some inherent weakness, some lack of self-judgment, which exposes one to it. Walking really with God in humility and dependence, we are safe,—safe as His strength can make us.

(1.) The beginning is in blessing,—the victory over the Ammonites and their hired allies. Along with this, however, we may find, perhaps, some hint of another beginning, such as has just been intimated, an unjudged link between the Ammonite and the Israelite, such as we should not have imagined in David. Was it the fruit of alliances in time past, when in his distress he had gone to the king of Moab and the king of Gath, for help that faith would have found much nearer? If so, this would show us how surely, if not prevented by true self-judgment, the sins of our past pursue us. The Ammonite, with the Moabite and the Philistine, were all special enemies of Israel, upon whom, as such, the divine sentence rested. Faith, as in Ruth, would surely at any time have found grace, as she did: but in none of these was there any faith; and Nahash the Ammonite was apparently the same as he whose insolent reproach upon Israel Saul had in the beginning of his reign been called to avert from the men of Jabesh. That very contention with Saul may have led him (for his own ends), as it did Achish, to "show kindness" to David; but real ground of fellowship, we may be sure, there was not. Favor shown to the Ammonite could not have the blessing of God, and so in the end it proves. Hanun means "favored," and thus empha-

thine eyes to honor thy father that David hath sent comforters unto thee? Is it not to [a]search the city and spy it out and overthrow it, that David hath sent his servants unto thee? And Hanun took David's servants, and [b]shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the midst as far as their buttocks, and sent them away. And they told it to David, and he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at [c]Jericho till your beards be grown, and then return.

*b.* (6–14.) The confederates and the conflict.

(*b*) And the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves stink before David, and the children of Ammon sent and [d]hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah [with] a thousand men, and men of Tob, twelve thousand men. And David heard of it, and sent Joab and all the host, the [e]mighty men. And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entrance of the gate; and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field. And Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind; and he chose out of all the [f]choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians; and the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, [g]If the Syrians be too strong

*a* *cf.* Gen. 42. 19.

*b* *cf.* Lev. 14. 8, 9. Lev. 19. 27.

*c* *cf.* Josh. 6. 26, with Gal. 6. 14.

*d* Prov. 11. 21.

*e* ch. 23. 8, etc.

*f* ver. 7.

*g* *ctr.* 1 Sam. 14. 9.

sizes the lesson, "Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn uprightness." Hanun, quickly persuaded by his counselors, adopts their suspicions as his own, repays the courtesy of David with contempt and ignominy, and then, anticipating the resentment he has provoked, seeks allies and rushes into open war.

Nahash would have thrust out the right eyes of the men of Jabesh, but to an Israelite this can never be done *but by his own consent.* Hanun, with a lighter reflection of his father's scorn, takes away from David's ambassadors half their beards and half their garments. At Jericho, the place of the world's judgment, they must tarry till they have recovered their dignity as men: so they return.

(*b.*) The Ammonites betake themselves to their natural allies. The pride of the world, in its various forms, which the Syrians picture, goes in full harmony with that perversion of the truth which we recognize in the Ammonite. In all error will be found some association with a heart in insubjection to God. Nor need we wonder if the men of Tob ("good men," as the world speaks,) join themselves in numbers to this company: what a contrast to the discreditable one that came to Adullam before, to shelter themselves with David! But "ye see your calling, brethren," and will understand well the reproach which grace has had at all times to meet. Just these Adullamites are now the "mighty men" that come with Joab against this array!

Joab, after all, ("Jehovah is Father,") is the suited leader of such. The "elder son" of the parable — a genuine "man of Tob" — never knew the gladness of the Father's house, never knew the Father's arms or the Father's kiss. An Adullamite that has known these grows quickly into a "mighty man" that has hearth and home to fight for: such links of love knit thews and sinews for the battlefield, as is well known. Nature still speaks in echo, though far off, of sweet tones with which the gospel has familiarized us.

for me, then thou shalt help me; and if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then will I come to help thee. Be [h]strong, and let us show ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God; and [i]Jehovah do what is good in his eyes! And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians, and they [j]fled before him. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians fled, they fled before Abishai, and entered into the city. And Joab returned from the children of Ammon and came to Jerusalem.

*h* Josh. 1.18.
*i* 1 Sam. 1. 23.
*j* ch. 5. 20.

c. (15–19.) The fully realized victory under David.

(*c*) And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they [k]gathered themselves together. And Hadarezer sent and brought the Syrians which were beyond the River: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the prince of the host of Hadarezer was before them. And it was told David: and [l]he gathered all Israel, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and [m]fought with him. And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven hundred men [in] chariots, and forty thousand horsemen; and Shobach the prince of their host he smote, and he died there. And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made [n]peace with Israel and served them. And the Syrians [o]feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

*k* Josh. 9. 1, 2.
*l* ch. 6. 1, etc.
*m* ver. 13.
*n* ch. 8. 6.
*o* *cf.* Josh. 2. 24.

2. (xi.) David's sin with Bathsheba, and slaughter of Uriah.

[2] And it came to pass at the return of the year, at the time when [p]kings go forth, that David sent Joab, and

*p* *cf.* Prov. 30. 29–31.

Victory depends upon defeating the Syrians, and against them Joab leads the choice men of his host. We know both sides, and understand the spiritual meaning here. In fact the Syrians are vanquished, and fly, and so the Ammonites: and these battles are repeated to this day, with the same result, that all is found to depend upon the Syrians,—a secret which the "mighty men" know well.

(*c*.) But the final victory waits for David in person, that is, for Christ in the day of His appearing. The pride of the world will not be smitten down effectually until He comes; and when He comes, the day of Armageddon will find it in Helam, the place of "their strength," banded together in opposition against Him. The full height of human pride will then be reached, the opposition in man's heart will come fully out, the confederacy which has existed ever since "Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together" against the Lord and against His Christ, will have reached its highest power and most imposing front, when the beast and the kings of the earth "shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them." Then Shobach, the "shedder" of blood, the prince of Hadarezer's ("Glory-help's") army shall himself be slain, and war between man and man be ended. "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

(ii.) From this hint of future blessing for the earth we turn back to trace in the executor of God's judgment upon others the course of sin which henceforth darkens with its shadow all David's life. Truly the king for whom Israel waited

his servants with him, and all Israel. And they wasted the land of the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah; but David [q]remained at Jerusalem. And it came to pass at [r]eventime, that David arose from his couch, and walked on the [s]roof of the king's house, and from the roof he [t]saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the [u]wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers and took her, and she came in to him, and he lay with her; and she [v]purified herself from her uncleanness and returned to her own house.

q *cf.* Deut. 25. 17, 18.
r *cf.* Jno. 13. 30.
s *cf.* ch. 16. 22.
t Job 31. 1. Matt. 5. 28
u Ex. 20. 17.
v *cf.* Lev. 15. 18, 19. *cf.* Prov. 30. 20.

had not yet come; and for Him ("the desire of all nations") the earth and Israel still are waiting. Of this sin in David we may not think either, as if it were the one black spot in his history, or as the result of a sudden and violent temptation too strong for resistance, or as anything unaccountable at all. It is rather the breaking out of tendencies easily to be discerned in him before this; and which, unchecked by heartfelt humbling before God, only waited for opportunity to display themselves, and work disaster. We know there was sudden temptation, and all the facilities afforded by despotic power and the license of the times; but it would be poor comfort to suppose that God's saints, if walking *as* saints, are liable to such sudden overthrows. The moral is not this; it is almost the very opposite of this: it is rather the certainty with which evil permitted in the heart works outward in the life at last; it is that sin is sin, and works as sin, however fashion may yield it license, and call it by another name. David's sin is not exceptional or unaccountable, else it would in that measure cease to have warning for us; and even as to himself would appear as much a misfortune as a crime; whereas nothing could more strictly follow law; cause and effect are as plain here as they may anywhere be traced.

The custom of the times favored polygamy; nor could the law itself as yet plainly and in terms forbid it. The law in its abstract form was perfect as exhibited in the tables of the covenant. In its concrete expression, as in the detailed commandments, "it was weak through the flesh." Grace alone could bring in power for perfect restraint, and therefore alone (as in Christianity) plainly declare the mind of God. In the precepts and walk of Christ our pattern, and in the competency of a known salvation and the indwelling Spirit, perfection absolutely is reached, but only thus. There has been, therefore, "the disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, (for the law made nothing perfect,) and the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw near to God." (Heb. vii. 18, 19.)

The law could not directly forbid polygamy. Early had the human race escaped from the divine law of creation in this matter (Gen. iv. 19), but in the race of Cain, and in the family of him whose song to his two wives so taken is in justification of homicide. At the new beginning after the flood, Noah and his three sons are found maintaining what began in Paradise.

Generations pass, and the world has traveled far from God: in the story of Abraham the next lesson is given us of a patriarchal household distracted by a sin of this kind, but to which his wife had urged, against faith, the man of faith, apparently to fulfill by carnal means a divine promise. Thus there is the most plausible pretext in the world, and urged in the most plausible way. It ends, however, not in the fulfillment of the promise, for which God needs no help, but in the casting out both of Hagar and her son; while her son, begotten in lawlessness, becomes the father of a lawless race.

Next Leah is foisted upon Jacob in deceit, and has to be supplemented with Rachel, the loved and bargained for. But here again strife and distraction follow,

And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. And David sent to Joab, [saying,] Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him, David inquired how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said unto Uriah, [w]Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet; and Uriah went forth from the king's house, and there followed him a [x]portion from the king. But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all his lord's servants, and went not down to his own house. And it was told David, saying, Uriah went not down to his house; and David said unto Uriah, Art thou not come from a journey? why didst thou not go down to thy house? And Uriah said unto David, The [y]ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord camp in the open field; and shall I go unto my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said unto Uriah, [z]Remain this day also, and tomorrow I will let thee go: and Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the morrow. And David invited him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him [a]drunk; and at even he went out to lie upon his couch with the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

*w cf.* ch. 20. 9, 10.

*x ctr.* Gen. 43. 34.

*y cf.* ch. 7. 6.

*z* ver. 1. *cf.* Judges 19. 6.

*a ctr.* Gen. 19. 32, 33.

and the sisters' rivalry increases the misery of it with two concubines additional. This very marriage of two sisters at the same time, which, standing where it did, might be a snare to Israel, the law (Levit. xviii. 18) specifically points out afterwards, to prohibit it.

In general, there were obvious hindrances which would limit the practice of polygamy; and it was yet reserved for a far future day and in the midst of the full light of Christianity, to put a premium upon it, as the Mormons do. On the contrary, where most temptation might meet with opportunity, as in the case of a king in Israel, such as David was, it was distinctly said, "He shall not multiply wives to himself, that they turn not his heart aside." (Deut. xvii. 17.) The perversion of the heart from God is here declared to be the result of such a practice; and the pregnant example of this we find in Solomon; but Solomon was himself the son of David and Bathsheba! Heredity, as men say, tells; but only where divine grace has not lifted the heart above it.

David had not fulfilled the injunction of the law. He had not realized his own weakness, as is shown by his many marriages. He had not made, as Job had, a covenant with his eyes. Walking in self-indulgence, the height to which he was raised precipitated his fall. In the warm sun of prosperity, the fruits of permitted license ripened into bitter vintage; and there was no resource, for none was sought! So he fell; and so will all who follow in this course.

At the time when kings go forth to war, and there being war, David remains at Jerusalem. These things which Scripture puts together tell their own tale as so put together. David was seeking ease and ungirding himself when circumstances called for activity and energy. What a contrast with the behavior of the Hittite soldier, whom for his faithfulness he presently condemns to death! "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord camp in the open field: and shall I go to my house?" What a wound for the conscience from this Hittite sword! David is at his house, and on his couch,

And it was so in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah; and he wrote in the letter, saying, [b]Set Uriah in the front of the fiercest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die. And it was so, when Joab observed the city, that he put Uriah in the place where he knew that men of valor were. And the men of the city came forth and fought with Joab; and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and [c]Uriah the Hittite died also. And Joab sent and told David all the matters of the war, and charged the messenger, saying: When thou hast finished speaking to the king of all the matters of the war, it shall be, if the king's anger rise, and he say unto thee, Why did ye approach so nigh the city to fight? did ye not know that they would shoot from the wall? who smote [d]Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of mill-stone on him from the wall, and he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. And the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent him for. And the messenger said unto David, The men prevailed against us, and came out against us into the field, and we were upon them as far as the entrance of the gate; and the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants, and some of the king's servants are dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. And David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, [e]Let not this thing be grievous in thine eyes, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle strong against the city, and overthrow it,—and [f]encourage him.

[b] 1 Sam. 18. 17.

[c] ch. 12. 9.

[d] Judg. 9. 53.

[e] *cf.* ch. 14. 9, etc. ch. 18. 13, 14.

[f] *cf.* ver. 1. ch. 12. 28.

and then walking upon the roof of his house, when he is snared through his eyes. The woman he finds is a wife, and of one of his own heroic men now at the war for Israel and for him; but nothing stops him. He is a king, and everything yields to him with the facility which is the curse of power. She returns—purified, alas!—to her dishonored home.

But the consequences follow, and to escape them sin follows sin. He sends for Uriah, plays the deceiver, is balked by the devotedness and honesty that contrast so manifestly with his own conduct here, and at last, wrought into madness by the thought of his own shame and what may come of it, sends back the unsuspecting man with his own death-warrant in his hand, to be put into execution by the unscrupulous man he knows so well, and who is to serve him by it.

Strange it seems to find all this dwelt on and lingered over as it is in the history! the awful accusation of one who finds the place in it that David finds! The account of a crime by which truly the enemies of the Lord have been made to blaspheme, as Nathan says, from that day to this. There it is, clear and sharp-edged, to the last word of smooth hypocrisy: "Let not this thing be grievous in thine eyes, for the sword devoureth one as well as another:—encourage him!" There it is in the light, and to be ever in the light, published in the book of inspiration, handed down from generation to generation, to be read by all eyes that will, and by the people of God assuredly, as long as the word of

And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she [g] mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house; and she became his wife and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done [h] displeased Jehovah.

3. (xii.1-25.) The divine oracle.

[3] And Jehovah sent [i] Nathan to David; and he came unto him, and said unto him: There were [j] two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding [k] many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and it grew up together with him and with his children: it ate of his morsel and drank of his cup, and slept in his bosom, and was to him like a daughter. And there came a [l] traveller to the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to dress for the wayfaring man that had come unto him, and took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that had come unto him. And David's [m] anger was kindled greatly

[g] *ctr.* ver. 4.
[h] *cf.* 1Thess. 4. 6.
[i] ch. 7. 2, 3. 1 Ki. 1. 24.
[j] *cf.* 1 Ki. 20. 38–42. *cf.* Lk. 20. 9-16.
[k] *cf.* ver. 8. ch.5.13,etc.
[l] *cf.* Rom. 7. 21–23, with Gal. 5. 16-21.
[m] *cf.* Ro. 2. 21, 22.

God shall last! Yes, down to the seven days of mourning of the wife for her husband by her sin done to death, after which "David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife."

David, too, has faced that ever since, and faces it still: he will face it ever. It is put away, that sin, yet it remains, and will remain, type of all sins of His people, and of God's dealing with them: out of the holy light of eternity they will never pass,—out of our memories never! Here is man, here is his condemnation, —redeemed, saved, justified man! Thyself, reader; myself. Cease ye from man forever!—from ourselves, sinner or saint! Turn we to God forever, and let us ascribe greatness and salvation to Him alone.

This is what an unexercised conscience can bring a David to. This is what lack of self-judgment, with temptation and opportunity, may make of a saint! Shall we not cry afresh, with David himself, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"?

(iii.) "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Even among Christians, paralysis of conscience is not rare. Not, indeed, *general* paralysis, which would be as fatal spiritually as it is naturally, but a *local* paralysis. Touch a man at one point, he is all alive; he can feel acutely; he can denounce earnestly: touch him at another, there is no response; it is not even that he feels, but governs himself and gives no answer: no, he does not even *feel* it. Take two things judged by the Word alike as contrary to God, how differently will the minds of even true Christians be affected by them! Take the question of moral evil, with the mass, perhaps, of Christians to-day, how little are they affected by the most serious *doctrinal* evil in comparison with this! They would league readily with Unitarians or any others for the suppression of drunkenness, when if you asked them to league with drunkards for the suppression of Unitarianism, they would open their eyes with astonishment. And they would be quite right in the latter case, of course; but is the denial of Christ less serious? If we are to judge by the Word we shall have to say that, if the one is fleshly, the other is *devilish;* if the truth it is that sanctifies, the denial of the truth is to prohibit sanctification. And who in the light of Christianity will stand up to defend drunkenness? while as an angel of light Satan can propagate the other.

It is true that this may be urged upon the other side, that what the conscience of men almost universally condemns must be the most pernicious evil; and that

against the man, and he said unto Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man doing this is worthy of death; and he shall [n]restore the lamb fourfold, because he hath done this thing, and had no pity. And Nathan said unto David, [o]Thou art the man. Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, *I* [p]anointed thee king over Israel, and *I* delivered thee from the [q]hand of Saul; and I gave thee the house of thy lord, and the wives of thy lord into thy bosom, and gave thee the [r]house of Israel and Judah, and, had that been too little, would further have given thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah to do evil in his sight, and [s]smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword? thou hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. And now the [t]sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will [u]raise up against thee evil out of thine own house, and will take [v]thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun: for thou didst it secretly, but I will do this

*n* Ex. 22. 1. Luke 19. 8.
*o cf.* Ps. 50. 21. Jno. 4. 16–18. *cf.* Ro. 3. 19.
*p* 1 Sa. 16. 13.
*q* 1 Sa. 26. 17, etc.
*r* ch. 2. 1, 2. ch. 5. 1–3.
*s cf.* Gen. 37. 27.
*t* ch. 13. 28. ch. 18. 33.
*u* ch. 16. 11.
*v* ch. 16. 21. Deut. 28. 30. *cf.* Gal. 6. 7, 8.

to get men to Christ you must first reform them: but this is mere natural judgment only, and the denial of the gospel and of the power of Christ.

It will be found, one must fear, that with the highest possible standard of judgment, those who accept the word of God as that are practically far below it, and walk not in the light of the sanctuary, but in the common light of men. And how easily, if at any time the walk is not with God, does the standard lower itself to something much nearer the level of the walk! Adepts as we are at self-deceit, if the eye be not single and the whole body be not full of light, and if we can no longer see, we *dream*,—*shaping* our dreams also in a way which will show clearly (to others, at least) the *quality* of our slumber: "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Thus David's sin, with all its aggravation, does not seem to have been like a blow that wakes one with a start to consciousness and pain, but like the heavier blow or fall that brings unconsciousness. His demeanor before Nathan does not betray at least the convicted sinner, while he listens to the story, so much less grave than his, of the rich man, with his flocks and herds, singling out for slaughter for his pleasure the one pet ewe lamb of the poor man his neighbor. At the end he is wrought into a passion of justice, which falls, one can see plainly, in the most unlooked-for way, upon himself at the disclosure, "Thou art the man." Then comes the summing up, item by item, of his guilt, the word of Jehovah that breaks the rocks asunder, and makes the mightiest and proudest quake before it; until humbled, silenced, all the fire gone out of him, not the judge now but the criminal, he bows to receive the sentence of the Lord. Out of his own house, that house of which once so differently, and "not after the manner of men," had Jehovah spoken,—out of that house should evil now arise, the blessing banned, because he had profaned it. He had struck at the holiest of nature's ties; and nature in his own cherished ties should strike him. Think of how he would look now into the faces of his children, and shudder, asking himself, which of these was to be the destined wrath of God upon his sin,—which of these sons of his strength should smite his father!

But the sentence is passed, and is not to be revoked: it has smitten him with a divinely directed blow right on the head of his sin; yea, it is his sin that smites him. But he does not say, "I have sinned against myself," though that

thing before [w]all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have [x]sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah hath also [y]put away thy sin: thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this thing thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to [z]blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall [a]surely die.

And Nathan departed to his house. And Jehovah [b]struck the child which Uriah's wife had borne to David, and it was very sick. And David [c]besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the ground. And the elders of his house arose [and went] to him, to raise him up from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the

w ch. 16. 22.
x *ctr.* 1 Sa. 15. 24. *cf.* Ps. 51. ch. 24. 10.
y *cf.* 1 John 1. 9. *cf.* 1 John 2. 1, 2. Ps. 32. 5.
z Rom. 2. 24. Ezek. 36. 20-23. 1 Tim. 6. 1.
a Ex. 32. 35. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 18.
b *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 30-32.
c *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 8. *cf.* Deut. 3. 26.

be true; nor does he plead against his sentence. He does not say, though that be plainly true, "I have sinned against my brother." Nor does he profess his penitence even, adding to his confession what is meant as some balance, however slight, over against it. His mouth is stopped as to all this: he knows God and himself too well. "I have sinned against Jehovah" is now all that he can say; and the flash of divine light which has revealed this to him is more, as one sees, than the thunder-peal which follows it. Such is true conviction.

Accordingly, the voice of divine mercy is not delayed: "Jehovah has also put away thy sin: thou shalt not die." For sin such as his, there was in the law no offering or sacrifice: death was the righteous penalty, which only could be remitted directly by the Throne above the throne. And this is the meaning of what he declares in his psalm of penitence: "for Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering"; and then, in contrast with that, he shows what God had accepted as of more value with Him: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps. li. 16, 17.)

This is not, of course, a denial of the worth and need of sacrifice, but only of such as were in his hand to bring, or the law could ordain. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin; and for sins like David's these were not spoken of at all. What really availed to prevent the extreme sentence, when nothing else could, was just the "broken heart," divinely convicted, which God saw in him. This is no question of atonement: there was no atonement made with God by this conviction; the *atonement* — for David and for all others — was made on Calvary alone; only through this could the mercy of God prevail against judgment. The contrite heart was only, as a "sacrifice," upon the footing of the legal sacrifices, as having efficacy through the work to which they pointed; — though *more* efficacious than these because it testified of real faith on the part of him in whom it had produced this, and which linked him with that in which the efficacy truly was.

Yet the government of God is not displaced by the grace shown, nor would it be grace that did displace it. The throne becomes a "throne of grace," but is no less — one may reverently say, all the more — a *throne*. God reigns, through Christ's work, in the joyful hearts of the redeemed. The knowledge of Him who reigns makes His reign to be the one necessity, and rest, and joy. His acts are light and love. If there be evil, He must be seen to be in opposition to the evil, even as He seeks in His love to deliver men from it. His chastenings are needed by His children, because they are children; they are needed, also, as witness to the world of what He is. Thus for David the government of God is not hindered but necessitated by the relation that David bears to Him: "because by this thing thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

child [d]died. And David's servants feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken to our voice; and now, if we tell him that the child is dead, he will do harm. And David saw that the servants whispered, and David perceived that the child was dead: and David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? and they said, He is dead. And David [e]arose from the ground, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes, and entered into the house of Jehovah, and [f]worshiped: and he went to his own house, and he asked, and they set bread before him, and he ate. And his servants said unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the living child; and when the child was dead, thou didst rise up and eat bread. And he said, While the child was still alive I fasted and wept: for I said, Who knoweth whether Jehovah will be [g]gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, why should I fast? can I bring him back again? I am [h]going unto him, but he will not return to me.

And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her, and she bare a son; and he called his name [i]Solomon, and Jehovah [j]loved him. And he sent by the hand of [k]Nathan the prophet, and called his name Jedidiah, on account of Jehovah.

4. (xii. 26-31.) The fall of Rabbah.

[4]And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. And Joab [l]sent mes-

d 2 Ki. 4. 20.
e *cf.* Job 1. 20, 21.
f *cf.* Heb. 12. 11.
g *cf.* ch. 24. 14.
h *cf.* 1 Sa. 28. 19, with Phil. 1. 23.
i Matt. 1. 6.
j Deut. 33. 12.
k vv. 1, 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 2. 1-11.
l *cf.* ch. 19. 5-7.

To remove this sentence, therefore, all David's fasting and prayer are ineffectual. The king mourns but submits, and to the question of his servants as to his change of conduct on hearing of the child's death he answers by showing that it was not mere natural grief that had actuated him, nor would he fret against the Lord by useless sorrow. The child had gone whither David himself would follow, and where he would find him: in this certainly he expresses the comfort that remains for him of meeting in eternity the babe of a few days' existence upon earth.

The birth and naming of Solomon shows us, on the other hand, how complete was the divine forgiveness, and how completely David's heart was possessed by it. "Peaceful" could he be and call this child of Bathsheba, spite even of the unrevoked declaration as to the sword upon his house. The future is not untroubled, and yet his heart is. There is a true peace in submission, where God is known in His perfect love: *that* "perfect love casteth out fear"; and how else is this ever attainable?

And to this faith Jehovah answers: not *hence* is the blow to come, though it might well be thought so. Where our sin has been met and healed by the grace of God in self-judgment, there are we strongest against attack; the enemy will rather select another part. This son of Bathsheba, son of peace as he is to his father's heart. God seals to him as His gift, with a love the barrier of which cannot be broken through: "Jehovah loved him; and he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and called him Jedidiah," "beloved of Jah." Let us bless God for a love that can so triumph over sin.

(iv.) And now the chief city of Ammon falls,—Rabbah, the "great." Were we in the line of former symbolism, the connection of this with what immediately precedes would not be doubtful. Let God's great remedy for sin be

sengers unto David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and taken the city of waters; and now gather the rest of the people, and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city, and it be called after [m] my name. And David gathered all the people, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it. And he took their king's [n] crown from off his head, the weight of which was a talent of gold, with precious stones: and it was [set] on David's head; and he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance. And the people that were therein he brought forth, and put them under the [o] saw, and under iron harrows, and under iron axes, and made them pass through the brick-kilns. And so did he to all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

m *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 6-9,

n 1 Chr. 20. 1.

o *cf.* Gen. 49. 27, with Ps. 149. 6-9.

SUBDIVISION 5. (Chap. xiii.–xxi. 14.)

*The Divine Throne vindicates itself.*

(XIII., XIV.).

Consistent recompense.

1. (xiii. 1-19.) The out-break of lust.

1. [1] AND it came to pass after those days that [p] Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar, and Amnon the son of David [q] loved her. And Amnon was so troubled that he fell sick on ac-

p ch. 15. 1, etc.

q *ctr.* ver. 15.

understood and realized in souls, the stronghold of heresy (of which the Ammonite speaks) is surely taken, and the power of it destroyed. The mind wanders from God because the heart has wandered,—if indeed it has ever known Him. The apprehension of grace it is that keeps the heart, and delivers therefore from the dominion of sin, putting one under Him in whose presence is our sanctuary from it. Grace maintains the sovereignty of God for the soul; while he who is not at peace with God in the knowledge of it invents, or is ready to accept the invention of, a God with whom he can be at peace. The son of Bathsheba being born, Rabbah falls. For Bathsheba here attains the power of her name, which, we have seen, is "daughter of the oath," and equivalent to what she is also called, Bathshua, the "daughter of salvation." Thus all is of a piece.

A gleam of typical meaning would, in fact, seem to flash out here, most appropriately, surely. And in this way we need not find fault with our David, if he deal however severely with the Ammonite. Scripture is severe enough against doctrinal evil, which is the dishonor of God and the perversion of the truth which alone sanctifies. The knowledge of God in Christ is not consistent with indifference to that which affects His glory. The crown which the Ammonite king usurps belongs to David's head, which alone can easily sustain the weight of it: the error must meet its judgment.

Historically we are in no way inclined to justify the king of Israel. There may have been retaliation for Ammonite barbarities, such as Nahash's threatening of the men of Jabesh would prepare us for. Nothing of this, however, is in the history, which leaves all moral questions of this kind in general to the conscience of the reader. David has not shown himself in any way beyond criticism; and the word of God does not, as we know, cover up anything. The customs of the times were barbarous. We leave all this as really outside our province, and beyond our power to deal with aright. The instruction that we need lies in another direction.

SUBD. 5.

The public vindication of the divine throne now follows. It had, as we know, been already declared to David that evil should rise up to him out of his own house, and the sword never depart from it; the grace to himself personally did

count of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin, and Amnon thought it hard for him to do anything to her. And Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very [r]subtle man. And he said unto him, Why art thou, a [s]son of a king, so lean morning by morning? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. And Jonadab said unto him, Lie down on thy bed, and [t]feign thyself sick; and when thy father shall come to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come and bring me food, and dress the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it from her hand. And Amnon lay down and feigned himself sick, and the king came in to see him; and Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make a

r *cf.* Gen. 3. 1, etc.
s 1 Ki. 21. 4–7.
t *cf.* ch. 11. 8–12.

not alter this. The throne at Jerusalem was, as none other, responsible to be the expression of that higher one which belonged to Him who, while heaven and earth could not contain Him, was pleased to be known as dwelling between the cherubim. God's righteousness would be compromised indeed, if He went on with David without adequate vindication of His character against the sin of His representative. The prophetic word would therefore be carried out.

Chastening arises for David from his own house. The uncontrolled evil in his own character reflects itself in the passions of his sons, in whom the power of heredity unmistakably shows itself. Heredity, one of the cant words of the day, expresses nevertheless a truth of which the word of God is full, and human history, from Adam downward. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" was a question of Job's day, the statement of impossibility being only made the stronger by its form as a question. There is thus evil in our natures, but we are responsible to govern our natures, and grace and the power of God are stronger than these. Apart from the grace of God, therefore, or His restraining hand, nature will manifest itself, and here was the hound in leash ready to pursue David. We are now to see with what fatal effect.

1. With David himself the outbreak of lust, permitted in clear violation of the law of God, had led to murder. The king, the pattern of righteousness as he should have been, became thus the oppressor. In the recompense following here, as when a stone disturbs calm water the circle loses height as it widens, so now the lust and the murder are on different sides, but both within the ordained sphere of his own house. Two of his sons are reciprocally the injured and the injurer, and David is made to feel the pain on each side, his sympathy now with this and now with that. He is distracted, torn asunder, on both sides dishonored. The mockery of their names gives meaning to the whole, and proclaims it to all: Amnon, the "faithful," violating all fidelity; Absalom, the "father of peace," the slaughterer of his brother! With what other hopes had these names long since been given!

These too are his eldest, for the second son, Chileab, seems to have died, at least we read no more of him: they are those upon whom the hopes of his house most of all depended. They are the *first*, the leaders: what will be the history of those that come after them?—conflicting sons with the various interests of rival mothers, the awful confusion wrought by polygamy brought home to him!

Again, that the remembrance of his own sin has weakened his ability to execute judgment on it in others is plain by his conduct; or else that natural affection rendered him helpless. The effect was, in either case, the same: the unjudged evil worked on in family and kingdom, till they were filled with the leaven of it; Absalom recalled becomes a conspirator; and Ishbosheth's Maha-

couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand. And David sent to Tamar, to the house, saying, Go, I pray thee, to the house of Amnon thy brother, and prepare food for him. And Tamar went to the house of Amnon her brother, and he was lying down; and she took the dough and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. And she took the pan, and poured them out before him; and he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have every man out from me: and they went out every man from him. And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat it from thy hand. And Tamar took the cakes that she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother, into the chamber. And when she handed them to him to eat, he [u]took hold of her, and said, Come, lie with me, my sister. And she said to him, Nay, my brother, do not humble me; for such a thing is not to be done in Israel: do not this [v]folly. And I, where shall I carry my reproach? and thou wilt be as one of the fools in Israel. And now, I pray thee, speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from thee. But he would not hearken to her voice, and was [w]stronger than she, and humbled her, and lay with her.

[u] *cf.* Gen. 39. 12.

[v] Lev. 18. 9. Lev. 20. 17.

[w] Deut. 22. 25-27.

naim has soon a new tale to tell. The rebellion is stopped, and Absalom dies, smiting the father's heart with a new pang. David is recalled, but only to have revived the memory of the past in what proves by and by to be a prophecy of the future: the bond between Ephraim and Judah shows itself almost broken; and so at last, amid returning spasms of violence, the storm for the present passes away.

But who can tell when the effect of one sin ceases? Adam's, like David's, was one sin,—in outward seeming not so evil;—its effect is only multiplied to-day, by all the seed that it has ripened, sown again, and reaped, and again sown! As men have of late discovered disease and pestilence to be living germs that subsist upon corruption, and mature and multiply on the decay they bring, so is sin vital and prolific with the germs of bitter harvest. Blessed be God that He has provided a remedy for sin!

(i.) It will not be expected that there should be much comment upon Amnon's sin. The first-born of a despotic king, this had doubtless helped to nurture in him the growth of unrestrained will; while the atmosphere of a polygamous household, loosening family ties, could not but at the same time encourage the rambling inclinations of a luxurious temper. The very fence—not such but that it might be leaped—around the object of his pursuit might encourage it: prohibition broken through has its own charm with it,—"the pleasures of sin, for a season": "stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant; but he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

Nor can it be doubted that the influence of his father's sin had, with one like Amnon, been without the check upon it of his father's repentance. Sin gathers its arguments at its will, and refuses what makes not for its purpose. The highest unreason, it finds in will its reason. Its subtlety is that of a maniac, with large gaps for self-deception. Nor has the natural man ability to estimate spiritual values, as of faith, or of repentance. Amnon would only see that his father had sinned, and had not suffered: he could not know that his own vices were to be the scourge upon his father's sins. There is a necessary blindness that must be theirs who reject divine wisdom, and which therefore excuses none.

Then Amnon [x]hated her with exceeding hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, begone! And she said to him, There is no cause for this evil, greater than the other thou hast done me, in driving me away. But he would not hearken to her, and called his servant, that waited on him, and said, [y]Put ye now this [woman] out from me, and bolt the door after her. And she had on her a garment of many colors; for with such robes were the kings' daughters that were virgins appareled. And his attendant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put [z]ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors which was on her, and put her hand over her head, and went on, crying out as she went.

[x] ver. 1.

[y] *ctr.* ver. 10.

[z] Josh. 7. 6. ch. 1. 2.

2. (xiii. 20–36.) The stroke of the sword.

[2]And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but now, my sister, be still; he is thy brother: lay not this thing to heart. And Tamar remained, [a]desolate, in her brother Absalom's house. And king David heard all these things, and was very [b]wroth. But Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom [c]hated Amnon, because he had humbled his sister Tamar. And it came to pass after [d]two full years that Absalom had [e]sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came and said unto the king, Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; let, I pray thee, the king go, and his servants, with thy servant. And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to thee; and he pressed him, but he would not go, but blessed him. And Absalom said, If not, I pray thee, [f]let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said, Why should he go with thee? And Absalom pressed him, and he let Amnon go with him, and all the king's sons.

[a] ch. 20. 3.

[b] *cf.* ch. 12. 5.

[c] Lev. 19. 17.

[d] ch. 14. 28. *cf.* Gen. 27. 41.

[e] Gen. 38. 12, 13. 1 Sam. 25. 4.

[f] *cf.* ch. 11. 15.

All this had worked together to make Amnon the coarse, sensual, cruel despot that he was,—a spectre that might well terrify the father of such a son, and who had done so much to make him what he was.

Amnon, too, has his "subtle" adviser, Jonadab, with his beautiful name, "Jehovah freely gives," and his satanic spirit. Everywhere here names are in opposition to things; the piety in David, spotted, alas, with the flesh, seems to have worked for the loss of piety in others.

Across this scene, with ashes on her head and her rent garment of divers colors, flees Tamar, a childlike figure of wronged innocence, to her refuge in her brother's house. A king's court is no refuge, no safeguard. The king may be wroth, but it avails not: has he not himself introduced this shadow of uncompensated wrong that now pursues him? Did he not work the first dishonor to his home, and dig through its wall with his own hands?

(ii.) So vengeance comes into Absalom's hands, and they are hands that spare not. The wrong is bitter, and the future has its possibilities of worse. Amnon, first-born and natural heir, may soon be lord both of Absalom and Tamar. Yet for two years he has to hide and nurse in secret the wrath that will be sure be-

And Absalom commanded his servants, saying, Mark now when Amnon's heart is [g]good with wine; and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then slay him; fear not: have not I commanded you? be strong, and brave. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had charged them; and all the king's sons arose, and rode each one upon his mule, and fled. And it was so, while they were on the way, that a report came to David, saying, Absalom hath smitten all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left. And the king arose, and [h]rent his clothes, and lay upon the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent. And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the [i]appointment of Absalom this has been determined, from the day that he humbled his sister Tamar. And now let not my lord the king take the thing to heart, saying, All the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead. And Absalom fled. And the young man that watched lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, much people coming from the road behind him, from the hill side. And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons are come: as thy servant said, so it hath been. And so it was, as he ceased speaking, behold, the king's sons came; and they lifted up their voice and wept; and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

3. (xiii. 37-xiv.) The bringing back of Absalom.

[3] And Absalom [j]fled, and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur; and [David] mourned for his son every day. And Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. And king David [k]longed to go forth unto Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead. And Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's [l]heart was to-

g *cf.* 1 Thes. 5. 3.

h ch. 12. 10.

i ver. 3.

j *ctr.* Num. 35. 11.

k ch. 18. 5. 33.

l ch. 13. 39.

fore it strikes. Then he finds his opportunity. You see his heart in its depths, as he prepares his feast and the daggers of his servants. Amnon shall be smitten in the pleasure that he loves, when his heart is merry with wine, unrepenting and unabsolved. And it is done! In the midst of a carouse,—in the midst of the circle of the king's sons, Amnon is smitten and slain. The sword is upon David's house, as was predicted. Who has brought it there? Who has opened the door for it? The hand is the hand of Absalom; the sword is the sword of Uriah the Hittite!

(iii.) But the story is not yet half told; and David's own moral weakness, which is soon apparent, produces a disaster which presages the ruin of the kingdom. This may be long delayed,—may even seem for a time to be entirely averted, and the peace of Solomon's reign a greater triumph than David's victories: but this is no sooner closed than the long-threatened evil breaks out suddenly in a disruption of Israel's unity into hostile powers, working for mutual overthrow. And this they at last accomplish.

We have quite full detail here. The principles that work the evil are amply given us, the main actor being now the unscrupulous Joab. He knows well the weak side of David's nature,—knows enough of divine grace also, and of its

ward Absalom; and Joab sent to Tekoa, and fetched thence a [m] wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on the garments of mourning, I pray, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that hath mourned long time for the dead, and go to the king, and speak to him after this manner: and Joab put the words into her mouth.

*m ctr.* 1 Ki. 14. 2.

And when the woman of Tekoa spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, [n] Help, O king! And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she said, I am indeed a widow, and when my husband died, thy handmaid had two sons; and they two [o] strove together in the field, and there was no deliverer [to come] between them, and the one smote the other, and slew him. And behold, all the family rose up against thy handmaid, and said, Give him up that smote his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he slew: and we will destroy the heir also: so they will [p] quench my coal that is left, and will not leave my husband name nor remnant on the face of the earth. And the king said

*n cf.* ch. 12. 1–6.

*o* Ex. 21. 12–14.

*p cf.* Ru. 1. 5.

power over a soul that has learned its debt to it, to use it with effect in behalf of what is not grace. Yet he has no evil design against David, and does not join, as we know, in the after revolt of Absalom. He seems even to mean well to the king, to give him justification for doing what he knows is in his heart to do: he makes what would be ordinarily considered but a well-intentioned blunder,—goes wrong because, alas, he has no divine wisdom, does not seek it. His is the misery of a soul at its best away from God, and thus of necessity leading others (even involuntarily) away from Him. David's is the misery of having a counselor like this, who has made himself after his fashion useful to him, and who, spite of the demur of conscience, has to be accepted as such. Joab is to David like an unjudged sin, against which he has, of course, no power, and who is always at hand to strengthen the worse and defeat the better nature. Let us earnestly pray and seek that we have no Joabs.

He hides himself behind his instrument, the woman of Tekoa, who will work more effectively upon the heart of the king. The appeal is all to the heart, and for this purpose the pity roused by the widow's tale will be the most powerful means that can be devised. He borrows, possibly, Nathan's method; but Nathan sought through the heart to reach and work upon the conscience; Joab seeks, on the contrary, to override and set it aside. He has hardened his own and prospered: he is no prophet, to foresee the end; the future does not trouble him: he cannot see why conscience should trouble another to this extent. Absalom has sinned; but so had Amnon; and the thing is done,—cannot now be recalled,—why keep up the remembrance?

The woman's story need not be too like the story of Absalom: that might be dangerous. The emotions have a storm-like impetuosity of action, which when roused does not respect the channels of sober judgment, mental any more than moral. David's affections, once acted on by the needful stimulus, will catch all the similarities of the case suggested, and let slip the rest. Thus the sudden strife in the field is better for his purpose than the two years' murder hidden in the heart which was the reality behind the picture, and the pitiful condition of the widow with her "coal that is left" ready to be quenched can be thrown in for the sake of the impression. When the king has pledged himself to the woman, it is assumed that he has judged his own case, and that he cannot draw back from his pledged word. The net is not spread in vain, though almost in sight of the bird.

unto the woman, Go unto thy house, and I will give charge concerning thee. And the woman of Tekoa said unto the king, Upon me, my lord the king, be the iniquity, and on my father's house, and let the king and his throne be guiltless. And the king said, He that speaketh unto thee, bring him unto me, and he shall not touch thee any more. And she said, I pray thee, let the king remember Jehovah thy God, that the avenger of blood do not increase destruction, and that they cut not off my son. And he said, [q]As Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the ground. And the woman said, I pray thee, let thy handmaid speak a word to my lord the king. And he said, Speak. And the woman said, Why then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? because the king in saying this thing is as one guilty, in that the king does not bring back his banished. For we must [r]needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; and God taketh not away the life, but [s]deviseth plans that the banished be not [still] banished from him. And now that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, [it is] because the people have made me afraid, and thy servant said, I will now speak unto the king: it may be the king will perform the request of his handmaid. For the king will hearken to deliver his handmaid out of the grasp of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. And thy servant said, The word of my lord the king be now for rest: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad, and Jehovah thy God be with thee.

And the king said unto the woman, Hide not from me now the thing that *I* am asking thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. And the king said, Is the hand of [t]Joab with thee in all

q *cf.* Prov. 18. 13.

r *ctr.* ch. 13. 29.

s *cf.* Rom. 3. 24-26.

t ver. 1.

In application, the justice of the case is cleverly made to be sin against the people of God: the king is guilty in not bringing home his banished. Nay, the grace of God, so signally proved as it had been by David, is urged against him: God Himself "deviseth plans that the banished be not [still] banished from Him." Thus he is walled off from the appeal of conscience, and hedged in on every side.

Two things are entirely ignored, however: the need of atonement to the broken law, and the guarantee as to the future of the forgiven sinner. God's plan whereby the banished are restored includes both these things, and therefore makes for righteousness, as it must do to be grace. Mercy to the merely impenitent is only license to sin, and the fruit of this David finds in the end; and to allow the law to be violated without reparation enfeebles all the power of government. It is not therefore grace according to God that the woman urges; it is only grace according to Joab; and he, like so many more, misunderstands and perverts it. Yet David himself accepts the perversion; but he is blinded by his affection for his son. He discerns the part of Joab in the matter,—knows that it is a plot, and knows well the plotter, who was as far as possible from being any represent-

this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, there is no turning to the right hand or the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab himself bade me, and he put all these words into thy servant's mouth. For the purpose of changing the appearance of the matter hath thy servant Joab done this thing, and my lord is wise with the wisdom of an [u]angel of God, knowing everything that is upon the earth.

And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, [v]I have done this thing: go therefore, and bring back the young man Absalom. And Joab fell to the ground upon his face, and bowed himself, and blessed the king; and Joab said, To-day doth thy servant know that I have found favor in thy sight, my lord the king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant. And Joab arose, and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and [w]let him not see my face; and Absalom turned to his own house, and the face of the king he saw not.

And in all Israel there was not a man so much to be praised as Absalom for his [x]beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he shaved his [y]head (for it was at every year's end he shaved it,—because it was heavy on him therefore he shaved it) he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king's weight. And there were [z]born to Absalom three sons and one daughter, and her name was Tamar: she was a woman of beautiful appearance.

u ver. 17. *cf.* Prov. 29. 5.
v *cf.* Matt. 14. 9.
w *ctr.* Luke 15. 20. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 19-22.
x *cf.* 1 Sam. 10. 23. *cf.* Matt. 23. 27.
y *cf.* ch. 18. 9.
z ch. 18. 18. ch. 13. 2.

ative of divine grace. He seems to catch at the idea that he has been made to do this without knowing what he had done, and that he really cannot go back; yet he cannot act consistently upon the idea of grace, he cannot receive Absalom as the penitent he was not, and dare not open his arms after the divine way with a returning prodigal. There is no ring nor fatted calf, nor sight even of his father's face, for the unhappy man whom the captain of the host brings back from Geshur. "Absalom returned to his own house, and the face of the king he saw not."

At this point we are told of the great beauty of Absalom. It is one of the miseries of a soul away from God, that every natural gift becomes evil instead of good; and among these there is none more ensnaring than that of personal beauty. Just as what is merely external, it is what is most surely appreciated both by its possessor and those around. Spite even of our better judgment also, it is hard to believe that this fair exterior does not represent aright the soul within. Absalom was conscious certainly of his power in this respect: who that has it is not? And if any, the exception would not be in this self-willed favorite of his father and of the people, whose vanity is shown in the long permitted growth and weight of his luxuriant hair.

One sees easily indeed in him the consciousness of this possession, to be yet so fatal to him, while for two years he is allowed to fret vainly at the restraint under which he is put. We know already how long he could nurse in secret a dangerous resolve. Here evidently was the beginning of resentment against his father, and of ambitious projects soon to work disaster to many beside himself.

And Absalom dwelt [a]two whole years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. And Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, and he would not come to him; and he sent again the second time, but he would not come. And he said unto his servants, See, Joab's lot is beside mine, and he hath barley there: go and set it on [b]fire. And Absalom's servants set the lot on fire. And Joab arose, and came to Absalom, to his house, and said unto him, Why have thy servants set my lot on fire? And Absalom said unto Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Why am I come from Geshur? it would have been well for me to be there still. And now, let me see the king's face; and if there be [c]iniquity in me, let him put me to death. And Joab came unto the king, and told him. And he called Absalom, and he came unto the king; and he bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king [d]kissed Absalom.

a ch. 13. 23.

b *cf.* Jud. 15. 4, 5.

c *ctr.* ch. 12. 13.

d *cf.* ver. 24. *cf* Prov. 17. 15.

(XV.–XIX. 8.)

Absalom's conspiracy.

1. (xv.–xvi.–14.) Gatherings on either side.

*a.* (xv. 1–12.) Absalom king!

2. [1] (*a*) And it came to pass [e]after this that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate; and it came to pass that every man that had a cause to come to the king for judgment, Absalom [f]called him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good

e *cf.* Matt. 18. 27, 28. *cf.* Is. 26. 10.

f *cf.* Luke 16. 5–7.

Finally he delivers himself from the restriction under which he lies in his own impetuous and imperious manner: forces Joab to come and see him, forces himself into his father's presence. There is the complete opposite of any confession of sin: if he has committed iniquity he is ready to suffer for it; and his father's kiss of peace becomes thus not even the mercy of the woman of Tekoa, but the seal upon his own claim that he has no need of mercy.

(2.) The conclusion of this story is natural from such a beginning. He is no sooner restored to his father's favor than he becomes a conspirator against his father. There is little doubt that he was now the eldest surviving son of David: for of Chileab, the son of Abigail, we hear no more. As the grandson of a king upon his mother's side, the idea of rule would have familiarized itself with him, while the deed which had placed him in the line of succession to his father had yet compromised such claim to a most serious extent. The throne in Israel was not like that of any of the nations round: it was Jehovah's throne, and he who sat on it was the anointed of Jehovah. But Bathsheba's son had already received his name as the "beloved of Jah"; and it was no long step from that to the kingdom. It is simple to see how all these things would influence the bold and arrogant son of Maachah to strike for the coveted prize, which his father's sin and demonstrated weakness had brought also so much nearer to his grasp.

(i. *a.*) Hence now we find the leaven working. Absalom begins by assuming state, and fixing men's eyes upon himself. And from his standpoint this was natural, and according to the world's principles it was wise: one must believe in one's self, act for one's self, there is no safe waiting upon others: this is the necessary alternative of waiting upon God. In the next step we can realize once more how David's sin must have weakened faith in the righteousness of all his government. To stop the mouth of friends, to open the mouth of the assailant, what an effectual argument was the case of Uriah the Hittite! And who could

and right, but there is no one on the king's part to hear thee. And Absalom said, [g]Oh that I were made judge in the land, that any one who had any controversy or claim might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, when any man came near to do obeisance to him, that he put out his hand and took him and [h]kissed him. And in this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came unto the king for judgment: and Absalom [i]stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

And it came to pass at the end of forty [? four]* years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed unto Jehovah, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a [j]vow while I abode in Geshur in Syria, saying, If Jehovah indeed shall bring me again unto Jerusalem, then I will serve Jehovah. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. And he arose and went to [k]Hebron. And Absalom sent emissaries throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the [l]trumpet, say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, who were called and went in their simplicity, and knew not anything. And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's

g Jud. 9. 29.

h *cf.* ch. 5. 1.

i Rom. 16. 18.

j *cf.* ch. 13. 5.

k *ctr.* ch. 2. 1.

l *cf.* ch. 18. 16.

* "Forty" can hardly be the true reading, although the Hebrew and some principal versions have it. "Four" is found in the Syriac, Arabic, and some copies of the Latin versions, and in Josephus.

resist such charges of lax justice, when it was his own cause that was being pleaded by this brilliant and gracious son of the king with his readiness to do the right, and his kiss for every one that did him honor? So no wonder if the hearts of the Israelites were stolen, and the conspiracy gathered strength.

The end is reached by an infamous piece of hypocritical falsehood. Absalom forsooth had dedicated himself to Jehovah in Geshur, conditionally upon His bringing him again to Jerusalem; and now he has a vow to be fulfilled in Hebron. The king, unsuspicious as ever, sends him away in peace, and the concerted cry is raised that "Absalom reigns in Hebron."

The place is chosen well, being full of associations of the most endearing character for every Israelite. There Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived and walked with God, and there they were buried. Thence the fruit of the land had been brought to the people in the wilderness, and Caleb the man of faith had driven out the Anakim. More suggestive, perhaps, than all this, at Hebron David had begun his reign; and the new kingdom, it might be hoped, was not other than a return to those principles of right and truth with which the throne had been then established.

The two hundred men that went with Absalom in ignorant simplicity are but a type of the many who can be swept into the track of a revolution in the train of some leader in whom they have confidence. How many, even among Christians to-day, follow *men* rather than principles! There is little individuality of faith anywhere, and thus sects are formed and maintained. It is startling to think how many follow the truth itself, at bottom because some one else is following it, or again is following some one else who follows it! And this has therefore again and again to be tested; and again and again a fresh putting forth of truth which has nothing but the authority of truth to commend it, sifts and breaks into these mere human followings.

Ahithophel the Gilonite was moved in a very different way. The father of

counsellor, from his city, Giloh, while he offered [m]sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; and the people increased continually with Absalom.

*b.* (xv. 13–22.) David's departure from Jerusalem.

(*b*) And there came one that told David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him in Jerusalem, Arise, and let us [n]flee: for we shall not [else] escape from Absalom: make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants [will do] whatsoever my lord the king shall choose. And the king went forth, and all his household after him; and the king left ten women that were concubines, to keep the house. And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and stayed at a house far off. And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men that came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

And the king said to [o]Ittai the Gittite, Why dost thou also go with us? return and abide with the king; for thou art a [p]stranger, and an exile moreover [as] to

*m cf.* Is. 1. 11.

*n cf.* 1 Sam. 21. 10.

*o* ch. 23. 29. ch. 18. 2.

*p cf.* Luke 17. 18.

Eliam and grandfather of Bathsheba,* we are left indeed to infer the personal animosity to David, which is easily recognized in his after-proposal himself to pursue and only to smite *him*. He has been David's counselor, listened to (we are told) as a divine oracle, yet according to his name, the "brother of folly." And such is ever the worldly wisdom which we find in him. But again we see how, in the government of God, David's sin is following him now. It is this that is the dissolution of kingdoms, and the disruption of all social bonds; and he who has not accepted this in faith must find it true in bitter experience.

Absalom offers his sacrifices at Hebron, and at the same time sends for Ahithophel. The conspiracy appeals to heaven, and forecasts its devices against the divinely constituted order,—in this mad world a thing not so uncommon as to need any special remark. It is here more grossly done than usual; that is all.

(*b.*) David has now to prove how his sin has disorganized his kingdom. That defection could have gone so far before he had any knowledge of it shows how widely the old attachment to him had given way: "there came one that told David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom." How pitifully alone he must have been for news of this kind to break in on him after this manner! He finds quickly,—conscience, no doubt, depriving him also of his customary boldness,—that his only resource is flight. God is behind this, and resistance is in vain: to bow is the only hope. He immediately leaves the city with some well-proved followers, and his household, and the way is open for Absalom into Jerusalem.

But the hearts of men are now to be revealed; and there are still found those who have attachment for life or death to the fallen king. The first of these, the head and sample of others with him, is one who seems to come strangely here, Ittai the Gittite, or man of Gath. David, it seems, has done more than destroy the Philistine giant: he has captured, and in the most signal way, the men of the city. But a gleam of light flashes upon us with his name, Ittai, "*with* Jehovah." No wonder if one once abiding in the distance from God, a

* It is not directly stated that Eliam the son of Ahithophel (ch. xxiii. 34) is the father of Bathsheba (xi. 3), but the indirect evidence is of the strongest.

thy place. Coming [but] yesterday, shall I to-day make thee go up and down with us? and I going whither I may! [q]Return, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee. And Ittai answered the king, [r]As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or in life, there shall thy servant also be. And David said to Ittai, Go and [s]pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

c. (xv. 23–29.) The return of the ark.

(c) And all the land [t]wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over; the king also passed over the brook [u]Kidron, and all the people passed over towards the way of the wilderness. And behold, Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the [v]ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up until all the people had done passing out of the city. And the king said unto Zadok, carry [w]back the ark of God to the city. If I shall find favour in the eyes of Jehovah, he will bring me again, and show me it and his habitation. And if he say, I have no delight in thee, behold, [here am] I: [x]let him do to me as seemeth good to him. And the king said unto Zadok the priest, Thou art the seer: return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry by the fords of the wilderness, until there come

q *cf.* Ru. 1. 8.

r Ru. 1. 16. *cf.* John 6. 67–70.

s *cf.* Ro. 16. 10.

t *ctr.* ch. 6. 12.

u *cf.* John 18. 1.

v *cf.* 1 Sam. 14. 18.

w ch. 6. 12.

x *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 6.

"child of wrath," now brought nigh, should follow the One who has been the Victor in the conflict which that in Elah represents; nor can we refuse a type which shines with its own light. Pass on, Ittai, with thy six hundred: who can doubt the faithful service thou wilt give to thy master? Stranger and exile, we know where thy heart is: thou art fit to bear witness to a rejected king.

(*c.*) And now Zadok and Abiathar appear with the ark of the covenant, ready to accompany David in his flight; but this David realizes to be impossible. He is under chastening for his sin, and he will bow to the chastening. The ark of old accompanied Israel in the wilderness, but they were then on their way to the land of their possession, which could not again be lost, but because God had in the mean time rejected them as His people. This was in fact the meaning of the Babylonish captivity: Lo-ammi was written upon the nation (Hos. i. 9). But the time had not come; nor, if it had, could the ark abide with them. The Philistine possession of it had marked the end of the priestly headship, and had not God raised up Samuel, all had then been ended. Now the king stood where the priesthood once had been, but a time of forbearance had been announced, and the continuance of David's house. This stroke was personal to himself, and the ark of the covenant of God must not leave its habitation. If he still find favor in Jehovah's eyes, He will bring him back to it; if not, how vain and foolish were resistance; or to claim the token of a favor which had in fact departed!

This is characteristic of David. Forget God, alas, he does; and great are the evils and miseries that result from this: but he is not a rebel, nor can he despair of the divine mercy. He cleaves to and justifies the hand that smites him; and that hand will not go on to smite the penitent and submissive man.

The ark returns, therefore, with its attending priesthood, and David gains a post of observation in the forsaken city. In this there was, of course, nothing

[y] word from you to tell me. And Zadok and Abiathar carried again the ark of God to Jerusalem; and they abode there.

*d.* (xv. 30–xvi. 14.) Testings.

(*d*) And David went up by the ascent of the [z] Olives, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went up barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and went up, weeping as they went up. And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, [a] Frustrate, I pray thee, the counsel of Ahithophel, Jehovah. And it came to pass, when David had come to the summit where he worshiped God, behold, Hushai the Arkite came to meet him with his coat rent and earth upon his head. And David said unto him, If thou pass on with me, thou wilt be a burden unto me; but if thou return to the city, and [b] say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king: as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so now will I be thy servant; then mayest thou for me [c] defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. And are there not with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? and it shall be [that] whatever thou hear out of the king's house thou shalt tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, there are there

*y* ch. 17. 15, 16.

*z cf.* Jno. 8. 1. Ps. 3, title.

*a* 1 Cor. 1. 19. Ps. 55. 9, 12–14.

*b ctr.* 2 Cor. 10. 4.

*c* Ro. 12. 21.

but what was according to truth and righteousness. The priests of the Most High owed no allegiance to the usurper and willing parricide, while they *did* owe allegiance to the divinely sanctified king. But of the counterplots that follow one must judge very differently.

(*d.*) David goes up by the ascent of Olivet with all the external signs of penitential sorrow. He is told now of Ahithophel's accession to the conspiracy, and prays Jehovah to frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel, the acuteness of which he knew so well. Presently a help in this direction offers itself, of which he is not slow to avail himself. Hushai the Arkite comes to meet him with the usual manifestations of distress, but David represents to him that he will be but an additional burden upon the fugitive band, whereas if he attach himself to Absalom, with professions of service, he might for him defeat Ahithophel's counsel. Means of communication will be found by him in the sons of the priests.

David thus thinks that conspiracy can justify conspiracy, and, in the war that has begun, deceit may rightly counterwork deceit. Evil with a good end will thus become good; or at least we may do it that good may come: a conclusion which the apostle declares to subject to just judgment those who hold it. Yet it is still maintained under all the light of Christianity, and practically followed by how many in how many forms! This principle is one that David has himself acted on, as we remember, in the old days of Philistine refuge; and these things, if not judged, may easily revive after a long time of dormancy.

It is true that Absalom could have no rights to be respected in the position which he has taken. As far as *he* is concerned, treachery is his just due, and that is what gives its color to an immoral argument. If Absalom has ever so much forfeited his rights, God has not on that account forfeited *His;* and our lives are to be lived *to Him.* To leave out God is to bring confusion into all reasoning.

Hushai means "hasty," while (remarkably enough) his Gentile name, the Arkite, is from a word which speaks of lengthening, and so "protraction" and "delay." And indeed there is a haste which, because it overlooks God, can do nothing else but delay all divine help and blessing. It is the first word that is

with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's [son], and Jonathan, Abiathar's [son]: and by them ye shall send to me everything that ye hear. And Hushai, David's friend, came to the city, and Absalom came to Jerusalem.

And when David was a little past the summit, behold, [d]Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, met him with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them [e]two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred raisin-cakes. and one hundred cakes of figs, and a skin of wine. And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses are for the king's household to ride upon, and the bread and the figs are for the young men to eat, and the wine for such as are faint in the wilderness to drink. And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel [f]restore me the kingdom of my father. And the king said unto Ziba, Behold, [g]thine is all that belonged to Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I bow myself down: may I find favor in thine eyes, my lord the king.

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the [h]family of the house of Saul, and his name was Shimei the son of Gera: he came out, cursing as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left. And thus said Shimei as he [i]cursed, Out, out, thou man of blood, and thou man of Belial! Jehovah

d ch. 19. 26.

e *ctr.* 1 Sam. 25. 18.

f *cf.* ch. 9. 8, 13.

g *cf.* ch. 9. 10. ch. 19. 29.

h ch. 19. 16, 18-23. 1 Ki. 2. 8, 9, 36-46.

i Ps. 109. 17-19, 28.

used there, where it is said, "he that believeth shall *not* make haste." (Isa. xxviii. 16.) How beautifully, with what delicate precision, does Scripture stamp the unbelieving devices of even men of faith! It is that Jacob policy which so miserably disappointed the man who practiced it so long, and of which the dislocated thigh symbolized the end. Not till then did he become Israel, a "prince with God."

Next we have Ziba and his slander of Mephibosheth, and again we find David making saddest "haste." He judges in the absence of the accused, on the faith of a most improbable story, told by one who might naturally suppose the traducing of his master to be the stepping-stone to his own advantage. The help he brings to David is thus credited to himself, and he finds royal recompense for it at his master's cost.

In all this David is surely not with God. He is still protracting the discipline which he is under, has not listened aright to the divine Voice under it, even though he knows and owns it to be of God. Yet in the next case he acts beautifully. In the case of open enemies, like Shimei, he seems to be more upon his guard, more ready to see meaning; and so it is often that the worst troubles seem to test us least.

Shimei is the spectre of Saul's house, risen up against the one who has taken possession of its estate and honors. Shimei means "my fame," or "my reputation," and he is the son of Gera, which we have elsewhere taken as "rumination": he is from Bahurim also, "choice or chosen ones." All this helps to link him with the house which he represents. But from Saul and from his line David may seem to have nothing whatever to fear. What charge can be brought against him with regard to these? Shimei's accusation of "the blood of the

hath returned on thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned, and Jehovah hath given the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and behold, thou art in thy calamity, because thou art a man of blood. And [j] Abishai the son of Zeruiah said unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. And the king said, [k] What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? yea, let him curse, for [l] Jehovah hath said unto him, Curse David; and who shall say, Why doest thou so? And David said unto Abishai and to all his servants, Behold, my [m] son, who came out of my bowels, seeketh my life; and how much more now shall not the Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for Jehovah hath bidden him. It may be that Jehovah will look on mine affliction, and that Jeho-

[j] ch. 19. 21.
[k] ch. 3. 39.
[l] Ps. 17. 13, 14.
[m] ch. 14. 33.

house of Saul" seems really the most senseless clamor. In the mind of an enemy only could the death of Abner or of Ishbosheth be attributed to him. Saul had justly forfeited the throne, and Ishbosheth had never any right claim to possess it. Shimei's curses were therefore empty noise, to which a magnanimous spirit could afford to give no heed.

But is this the whole account to be given of this attack? Are we to see in it merely the unrighteousness which would heap upon the great in their misfortune every inconsiderate calumny, and take delight in abasing further those whom God has already abased? Certainly, if we view it in this way, no one can forbid it to us. The thing is of every-day occurrence; the application so easy and obvious that it is scarce worth while to make it. The lesson is so elementary, it can scarcely be thought of as a lesson. And this is against it as any sufficient explanation of the place it occupies in the inspired history.

David also himself seems to recognize more than this in it. While the malice is plain, and as to Saul and his house personally he can easily justify himself, he still realizes that in some sense this rude Benjamite has his commission from Jehovah, "— Jehovah hath said to him, Curse David." Jehovah has permitted it, for a deeper purpose than Abishai in his resentment could possibly understand, or than Shimei could of course himself imagine.

David had not injured Saul or any of his house. But Saul's house had been removed to make way for David and his house,— that house already fallen into ruin. What, then, had been the value of this substitution? Saul had pursued David in his own intent to death, and David had actually caused Uriah to be slain,— not even in jealous fear of his own safety, but to cover the sin of his invasion of Uriah's house! Which was the better? Did it not seem as if for this David, the blood of Saul's house had been vainly, and so wrongly, shed?

True, Saul had not been really a theocratic king: he had disobeyed the command as to Amalek. But did not this even seem to make it worse, that *this* should be the theocratic king, now proved no better? Was not the judgment of God upon him now the proof that, after all, this was no help? The royal saint hunted as a criminal from his throne! Had he not, indeed, thus brought the blood of Saul's house, as it were, upon him?

And, in truth, if the remedy for man's ills be sought in this way, it is vain to exchange a Saul, even for a David. The hand of power is needed, and of absolute power, too: but where shall we find him to whom such power can be safely trusted? The answer of the world is being given to-day in the most decisive manner: the answer is, There is none: we can trust none! The constitutional king succeeds the despotic; democracy follows hard upon the constitutional kingdom: there must be a balance of wills and of interests; each separate interest

vah will requite me good for his cursing this day. And David and his men went on the way, and Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. And the king and all the people that were with him came to Ajephim,* and refreshed themselves there.

*e.* (xvi. 15–xvii. 23.) The government of God.

(*e*) And Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. And it came to pass, when Hushai the Arkite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, [n]Live the king! live the king! And Absalom said unto Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy [o]friend? And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay, but whom [p]Jehovah hath chosen, and this [q]people, even all the men of Israel, his will I be, and with him will I abide. And again, whom should I serve? [should it] not [be] in the presence of his son? As I have served in thy father's presence, so shall I be in thy presence.

n *cf.* ch. 13. 5, etc.
o Prov. 17. 17.
p ch. 5. 12.
q ch. 5. 1–3.

* The word means "weary," and is so translated in the common version; but in this case no place would be named. The "Bible Commentary" suggests that it was a caravansary; for which the name would be appropriate.

must have its measure of control upon the ruling power: the clash of interests, the "struggle for life" goes on; but it is no sign of hope or confidence in man, but the reverse: rightly interpreted, it is the sign of the world's despair!

And well may the world despair! Were it not that the heart perverts the head, and we are slow indeed to look the inevitable in the face, the end would long since have been reached. As it is, the language is read backward, and men still hope! Nay, the spirit of hope which breathes in Christianity has formed strange alliance with the optimism of the world, and brought into it an air of piety and faith that makes despair of the world a heresy. But for this the *spirit* of hope, which is truly Christian, has been separated from its embodiment in Scripture, the true and glorious hope of the coming king! Were it not for this, David and David's house must indeed inevitably follow Saul's into the gulf of ruin. Not David, but David's Seed is the hope of men: and this is what Shimei's curse at bottom points to: truly all would be under it, only that in self-despair is faith found, and the divine remedy for this and every other ill.

(*e.*) The wheel of God's government still turns, bringing Absalom to the highest point of prosperity, and David to the lowest; but from that moment David begins again to rise, and Absalom to fall, and from this he never recovers.

First, we find Hushai at his meeting with Absalom entering upon the part prescribed for him with a subtlety which makes us understand David's confidence in him. His repeated salutation is met coldly enough by the new king, who, arch-traitor as he is himself, is surprised at another's desertion. But the "king's friend" had doubtless earned the title by acts that were unmistakable, and Absalom's surprise had ground much deeper than his after-confidence. Indeed all through this scene there is a certain ambiguity which seems to intimate to us how unwilling was even the appearance of this desertion with him. "Nay, but," he says, "whom Jehovah hath chosen, and this people, even *all* the men of Israel, his will I be, and with him will I abide." And in the strict sense this was only true of David: his own counsel afterwards was founded on the assurance that *not* all the men of Israel (and much less Jehovah) had chosen Absalom. Again he says, "Whom should I serve? Should it not be in the presence of his son? As I have served in thy father's presence, so shall I be in thy presence."

And Absalom said unto Ahithophel, Give ye your counsel what we shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's [r] concubines, whom he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art become loathsome to thy father, and the hands of all that are with thee shall be strong. And they spread Absalom a tent upon the roof; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the [s] sight of all Israel. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days, was as if a man inquired of the word of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Absalom.

And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night; and I will come upon him while he is [t] weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid, and all the people that are with him shall flee, and I will smite the king only. And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned; [and] all the people shall be in peace. And the saying was [u] right in the eyes of Absalom, and in the eyes of all the elders of Israel.

r Gen. 35. 22.

s ch. 12. 11, 12.

t ch. 16. 14.

u ch. 16. 23.

Now faithful service of the father would make one look for faithful service with the son certainly; but only if the father's days were at an end. So Absalom interpreted it, of course, and was meant to interpret it, as if for Hushai David's reign were at an end. But if this were not so for him, then even in the son's presence the faithful service would be to the father still. But Absalom's speedy success and abundant vanity make all this what he desires it. Treacherous himself, he has no reason for refusing treachery; and he had doubtless covered it with fine words enough, not to look too closely at the words of others. Thus the evil he has indulged works evil for him.

Ahithophel's advice, with all its wickedness, reminds us again that he is the grandfather of Bathsheba. David shall be himself dishonored in the way that he has dealt dishonor; and upon the very roof from which the lust of his eyes had carried him into open sin. But this was, as we know, the fulfilling of God's word as to him. Wherever man's sin may carry him, it cannot find the place where God shall not be governor. But what a state of things in Israel when the wisdom of an Ahithophel sees only advantage in wickedness so gross and open! Can he suppose that they have so forgotten God that they will forget the due of such things with Him? Or that they will see but the punishment of David's sin, as if it cancelled the enormity of sin in Absalom?

What he does see clearly is that the breach between father and son must not be healed, must be rendered irrevocable, for the safety of the conspirators; and thus they must use him for their purposes as he has used them for his. The power of evil thus augments by the irreversible law that what we have made our servant shall become our master: "he that committeth sin is the servant of sin." Through whatever door it enters, it becomes master of the house.

But Ahithophel is, after all, "brother of foolishness." He does not see that the wheel swung round so far will come up again for David. God has glorified Himself in view of his sin, and openly: He can now therefore appear for him, as is soon manifest, and Ahithophel has to find. For his next counsel is that, with twelve thousand chosen men, he should be allowed to follow after David, scatter his attendants, and kill the king alone. All would then be assured: "the man whom thou seekest" being put to death, it is "as if all *returned*,"—speaking as if these had strayed from their allegiance, rather than the men of Absalom.

And Absalom said, Call now Hushai the Arkite also, and let us hear what he also saith. And Hushai came to Absalom, and Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying or not? speak thou. And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given this time is not good. And Hushai said, Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they are mighty men, and that they are [v] chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field; and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people: behold, he is [w] hid now in some pit, or in some such place; and it will be, when some of them fall at the first, that he that heareth will hearken and say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. And even the valiant man, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and that they that are with him are valiant men. But I counsel that [x] all Israel be fully gathered unto thee, from Dan even unto Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude, and that thou go to battle in thine own person. And we shall come upon him in some place where he shall be found; and we will light on him as the dew falleth on the ground; and of him and all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one. And if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the watercourse, till there be not one small stone found there. And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Arkite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For Jehovah had [y] appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, in order that Jehovah might bring evil upon Absalom.

And Hushai said unto [z] Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and thus have I counseled. And now send quickly, and tell David, saying, [a] Lodge not this night at the fords of the wilderness, but pass over entirely, lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him. And Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at Enrogel, and a maidservant went and told them, and they were to go and tell

v Ju. 18. 25.
w 1 Sa. 22. 1.
x ver. 24.
y ch. 15. 31.
z ch. 15. 28.
a *cf.* Gen. 19. 17.

But the limit is reached, and the wise and heartless counsel, though at first approved, is finally defeated by the opposition of Hushai. Exactly adapted to the man he is addressing, his speech works upon the fears and upon the vanity of Absalom. Nothing indeed could be wiser than his recommendation, if only one thing were granted which the new king does not stay to question, that the will of the nation as a whole has placed him where he is. Ahithophel knows better: hence his despair when Hushai's counsel is preferred before his own. While the ready messengers start off, not without personal risk, to bring David the news, Ahithophel quietly returns to Giloh, puts his affairs in order, and hangs himself,— the first suicide of which we read in Scripture.

king David: that they might not be seen to come into the city. But a lad saw them, and told Absalom. And they went both of them quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim; and he had a well in his court, and they went down into it. And the woman took and [b]spread the covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn upon it: and the thing was not known. And Absalom's servants came to the woman, to the house, and they said, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said to them, They are gone over the brook of water: and they sought and found them not, and returned to Jerusalem.

[b] Josh. 2. 5, 6. Ex. 1. 19.

And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise and pass quickly over the water, for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. And David arose, and all the people that were with him, and passed over [c]Jordan: by morning-light there failed not one of them that had not passed over Jordan.

[c] cf. Ps. 42. 6.

And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and rose, and gat him home to his city, and gave charge to his house, and [d]hanged himself and died, and he was buried in his father's sepulcre.

[d] Matt. 27. 5 ch. 18. 10.

2. (xvii. 24-xix. 7.) The civil war.

[2]And David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Ithra the Israelite,* who went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah Joab's moth-

* Probably, "Ishmaelite," as the Alex. text of the Septuagint here, and 1 Chron. ii. 17.

David passes over the fords of Jordan, and is in the mean time safe. His plan of defeating Ahithophel by Hushai has been completely successful; and, if success can do this, it is justified by it. How many, openly or secretly, scarcely perhaps allowing it to themselves, would accept such justification?

In this case there can be no real question. If deceit and treachery are evil,—if evil may *not* be done, that good may come,—if God therefore cannot lead his people in such a path,—then the success of a thing can be no sufficient test of fitness or expediency at any time. We have not to look the less carefully at the question of right because it can be demonstrated that a measure will be successful.

That David escaped by Hushai's means is certainly true. How much did he miss by it of seeing God's hand stretched out for him? How willingly do we deprive ourselves of many such glorious visions in the same way! By so much as we are richer in resources, by so much poorer do our lives become!

(ii.) Mahanaim once more answers to its name. Israel is again divided into "two camps." Absalom passes over Jordan and encamps in Gilead.

The benefit of delay to David's cause is soon realized in the rallying to him of many: so that his hundreds swell rapidly into thousands; and the quality of these adherents, as we may well believe, gives them rank beyond their number.

er. And Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

And it came to pass, when David was come to [e]Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash, of Rabbah of the children of [f]Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, [g]brought beds and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched [corn,] and beans, and lentiles, and parched [pulse,] and honey, and curds, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David and the people that were with him to eat: for they said, The people [have been] hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.

And David mustered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. And David committed a third part of the people into the hand of Joab, and a third part into the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part into the hand of [h]Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, [i]I will surely go forth with you myself also. But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we should ever so much flee, they will not care for us, and if half of us die, they will not care for us; but *thou* art worth [j]ten thousand of us, and now it is better that thou aid us from the city. And the king said unto them, What seemeth best to you I will do. And the king [k]stood by the gate side, and all the people went forth by hundreds and by thousands. And the king charged Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal [l]gently for my sake with the young man Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

And the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim. And the people of Israel were [m]smitten there before the servants of David; and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men. And the battle there was scattered over the face of all the country; and the [n]wood devoured more people that day than the sword

e ch. 2. 8, 12.
f *cf.* ch. 10. 1.
g ch. 19. 31.
h ch. 15. 19-21.
i ch. 21. 17.
j *cf.* Acts 21. 13.
k *cf.* 1 Sam. 4. 13.
l ch. 14. 33.
m Judg. 20. 35.
n *cf.* Ex. 14. 3.

We see in Shobi the Ammonite another example of that attractive power in David by which enemies by nature became his friends. With Shobi, Machir and Barzillai, Gileadites, contribute to his necessities at Mahanaim. Here he comes to a stand, and the forces on either side prepare for the conflict imminent.

David divides his army into three parts, under three tried leaders, the Gittite one. The tenderness and prudence of his followers restrain him from going forth with them to the battle. His love for the son that would have doomed him to death without remorse, is shown in his charge to the leaders in the hearing of all, for *his* sake to spare Absalom.

Of the battle itself there are no details; but of Absalom's men there are 20,000 slain, the wood of Ephraim entangling them after their defeat. Here Absalom meets his end in a way which speaks solemn judgment of the career it closes.

devoured. And Absalom met the servants of David; and Absalom was riding upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth; and his [o]head caught hold of the terebinth, and he was taken up between heaven and earth, and the mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom [p]hanged in the terebinth. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And behold, thou sawest, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten silver [pieces] and a girdle? And the man said unto Joab, Though I were to receive a thousand silver [pieces] in my hand, I would not put forth my hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king [q]charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have dealt falsely with my own life, for there is no matter concealed from the king, and *thou* wouldst have taken thy stand against [me]. And Joab said, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three spears in his hand and [r]thrust them into Absalom's heart while he was yet alive in the midst of the terebinth. And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom and slew him. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people [s]returned from pursuing after Israel, for Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into the great pit in the wood, and laid a very great [t]heap of stones upon him; and all Israel fled, every one to his tent. But Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself the pillar that is in the king's dale: for he said, I have [u]no son to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called unto this day, Absalom's monument.

And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, Let me now [v]run, and bear the king tidings that Jehovah hath given judgment for him out of the hand of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day; but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. And Joab said unto the Cushite, Go, tell the king what thou hast seen. And the Cushite bowed himself unto Joab and ran. And [w]Ahimaaz the son of

o Gen.40.19. Deut.21.22, 23.
p ch. 17. 23.
q ver. 5.
r *ctr.* ch. 14. 1, etc.
s ch. 2. 28.
t Josh. 7. 25, 26.
u *cf.* ch. 14. 27. *cf.* Ps. 109. 13.
v 1 Sam. 4. 12.
w ch. 17. 17.

Caught in the branches of a terebinth, he is lifted by his head between earth and heaven; that which supported him passing away from under him. There he dies at the hand of Joab and the young men that follow him, and is flung into a pit in the wood, with a great heap of stones heaped over him as over an executed criminal,—in striking contrast with the monument he had prepared for himself elsewhere.

The conveyance of the news to David is described with unexpected detail: the two messengers, one of whom so persistently seeks the service while he with-

Zadok said yet again to Joab, But however, let me, I pray thee, also run after the Cushite. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing thou hast no tidings ready? But however, [said he,] let me run. And he said unto him, Run. And Ahimaaz ran by the way of the [river-] circuit, and outran the Cushite.

And David was [x]sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate, unto the wall, and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, a man running alone. And the watchman called and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came on and drew near. And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold a man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the watchman said, The running of the foremost appeareth like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a [y]good man, and cometh with good tidings. And Ahimaaz called and said unto the king, Peace! And he fell down to the earth on his face before the king, and said, [z]Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz said, [a]When Joab sent the king's servant and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but knew not what it was. And the king said, Turn aside, stand here. And he turned aside and stood still. And behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, Let my lord the king receive the good tidings, for Jehovah hath given judgment for thee this day from the hand of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto the Cushite, Is the young man Absalom safe? And the Cushite said, The [b]enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee for evil, be as that young man. And the king was much moved, and went up to the upper chamber of the gate, and wept, and said thus as he went, [c]O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would that I had died for thee, Absalom, my son, my son!

And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. And the deliverance that day was turned into [d]mourning for all the people: for the people heard say that day, The king is grieved for his son. And the people stole that day into the city, as people steal away ashamed when they flee in battle. And the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son,

x 1 Sa. 4. 13.

y 1 Kings 1. 42.

z *cf.* ch. 16. 12.

a vers. 14–17.

b ch. 23. 38.

c ch. 12. 10.

d *cf.* Judg. 21. 2.

holds the distress of which he knows; the king's watch in the city; his pathetic tender inquiry after the "young man, Absalom"; then the burst of passionate grief, from which the people steal away abashed, as if *they* had suffered the defeat instead of having gained the victory; then the bold and effectual rebuke of Joab,

my son! And [e]Joab came into the house, unto the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, who this day have saved thy life and the lives of thy sons and thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives and the lives of thy concubines: in that thou lovest those that hate thee, and hatest those that love thee. For thou hast declared to-day, that princes and servants are naught to thee: for I know to-day that it would have been right in thine eyes if Absalom had lived, and all we had died. And now, arise, go forth, and speak comfortingly to thy servants: for I swear by Jehovah, if thou go not forth, there will not [f]tarry a man with thee to-night; and that will be worse to thee than all the evil that hath befallen thee from thy youth till now. And the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, Behold, the king sitteth in the gate. And all the people came before the king; but [g]Israel had fled every man to his tent.

[e] ch. 18. 14, etc.

[f] ch. 12. 28.

[g] ch. 20. 1.

(XIX. 9-40.)

The return of the king.

3. And all the people were at strife throughout the tribes of Israel, saying, The king delivered us out of the hold of our enemies, and he rescued us from the hold of the

which brings the king once more to the gate, where the people come again before him.

It is a touching history, with a general moral intent which is so obvious that it needs no special comment; but we leave it with a profound feeling that we have merely touched the surface, and that there are everywhere meanings that we have failed to reach. The typical significance which we have found through all the Old Testament history hitherto, here seems largely to fail us; but perhaps we ought not to wonder much at this. The history here is one of continuous sin and evil, on the part of the main actors in it, and of the government of God in view of this: and the very purport of it is to show the break-down of all hope for man, save in Christ Himself. David is here, therefore, not the likeness but the unlikeness to his Son and Lord. No doubt there may still be typical teaching; but if so, it will be incidental, partial, and supplementary to the general purport of the narrative. As yet we have not found this; but those who seek need not be discouraged on that account. The deeper meanings here have been yet but little sought: what has been yielded to the search as yet is only the beginning of what may be looked for by the patient inquirer.

(3.) We pass on then to the return of the king,—a fruitful subject, one would naturally deem it. David is now rising up out of his distresses; the government of God has vindicated itself, and is no longer against him; his rejection is over, and, except one brief revival of dangerous feeling, his throne is now to be established over a reunited people. It is natural to think here of Him who is soon to come in glory as the antitype of David in circumstances such as these; still, though types are often and variously repeated, it is well to remember that we have had already, much earlier in David's history, the types of Christ's rejection and His reign alike, and that we are here in a very different subdivision of the book. God loves to surprise and delight the ready heart with constant reminders of the glory of His Son; yet we may expect here probably a larger mingling of what is simply David's personal history, and what is unlikeness, as well as what is likeness.

Thus the opening sentences here show us the tribes of Israel at strife among themselves about bringing back the king. The king's own tribe holds back, and

[h] Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land because of Absalom; and Absalom whom we anointed over us is dead in battle; and now why are ye silent as to bringing back the king? And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the [i] last to bring back the king unto his house? for the word of all Israel is come unto the king, unto his house. *Ye* are my brethren; *ye* are my [j] bones and my flesh: and why are ye the last to bring back the king? And say ye to [k] Amasa, Art not thou my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou shalt not be captain of the host before me continually, instead of Joab. And he inclined the heart of all the men of Judah as one man; and they sent unto the king, [saying,] [l] Return thou and all thy servants.

And the king returned, and came to Jordan: and Judah came to [m] Gilgal, coming to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan. And [n] Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, who was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. And there were with him a thousand men of Benjamin, and [o] Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they forded the Jordan before the king. And the ferry-boat went over to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king as he crossed over Jordan; and he said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity to me nor remember what thy servant did perversely in the day that the king went forth of Jerusalem, the king taking it to heart. For thy servant knoweth that I have sinned: and lo, I am come this day the first of all the house of Joseph, coming down to meet my lord the king. And [p] Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the anointed of Jehovah? And

[h] ch. 8. 1.
[i] ch. 15. 24-26.
[j] ch. 5. 1.
[k] ch. 17. 25.
[l] ch. 16. 18.
[m] 1 Sa. 15. 33. ver. 40.
[n] ch. 16. 5. 1 Ki. 2. 8.
[o] ch. 16. 1.
[p] ch. 16. 9.

David sends to Zadok and Abiathar to urge them to press upon these the state of feeling of the other tribes, and his own kinship to themselves. Amasa, captain of the host so recently come against him, he urges similarly, promising him the same place as under Absalom, instead of Joab. Judah is thus gained, and with their usual impulsiveness, without seeking the co-operation of the rest of Israel, they send their message of recall to the king: "Return thou, and all thy servants." There is no confession or sorrow for the past; and the independence works for evil in the state of jealousy already subsisting between the tribes. In all this David shows little of the dignity of faith, and perhaps on this account is allowed to suffer at least what may convince him of his folly. Sheba's insurrection and the murder of Amasa — who seems little qualified for the position to which he is raised — both spring apparently out of David's unbelieving "haste" on this occasion.

Nor does his mercy to Shimei seem to have sustained sufficiently the righteousness that should characterize the throne. So evidently he believed afterwards, as we see by his recommendation to Solomon with regard to him. To relax the

David said, [q] What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries to me? Shall any one be put to death to-day in Israel? for do I not know that I am to-day king over Israel? And the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die: and the king [r] sware unto him.

And [s] Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king: and he had not [t] done [anything to] his feet, nor done [anything to] his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day that he came [again] in peace. And it was so when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth? And he said, My lord the king, my servant [u] deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me the ass and ride upon it, that I may go to the king: for thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king. But my lord the king is as an [v] angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all my father's house were but as [w] dead men before my lord the king, and thou didst set thy servant among them that eat at thy table: what right any more, then, have I to cry unto the king? And the king said, Why speakest thou any more of thine affairs? I have said, Thou and Ziba [x] divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, [y] Let him even take all, since my lord the king hath come unto his house in peace.

And [z] Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. And Barzillai was very aged, being eighty years old; and it was he that had maintained the king when he abode at Mahanaim: for he was a very great man. And the king said unto Barzillai, Pass thou over with me, and I will maintain thee

q ch. 16. 10.
r *cf.* ch. 14. 11.
s ch. 9. 6.
t *cf.* Luke 5. 34, 35.
u ch. 16. 3.
v *ctr.* ch. 14. 20.
w ch. 9. 8.
x ch. 16. 4. *ctr.* ch. 9. 7.
y *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 7.
z ch. 17. 27. 1 Kl. 2. 7.

extreme penalty might well suit the day of David's restoration to the throne, especially in view of his professed repentance. But there seems to have been no reality such as would have harmonized with this fuller grace.

As to Mephibosheth, David's treatment of him is that of a man unable to resist conviction of his former rashness, and yet unwilling to face fully the injustice of which he had been guilty. Tricked by his servant and compelled to inactivity by his helpless condition, Mephibosheth has been plainly mourning for his benefactor and friend. David compromises with his conscience and his promise to Ziba, his irritable peremptoriness showing him to be ill at ease. The son of Jonathan manifests the spirit of his father, the affection which is not to be bought and cannot be changed by the undeserved change he experiences: "Let him even take all, since the king has come unto his house in peace." It would be good to think that the cloud could be lifted from David as to this matter, but the history leaves him under it, and we must. The "I have said" is meant to intimate finality; and we have no hint of its recall.

Barzillai's leave-taking we must pass over, simply as having nothing to add to the Scripture account. Save some natural analogies, there does not after all seem much to compare with the great event for which as Christians we are taught

with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, [a]How many are the days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day eighty years old: can I discern between good and bad? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men or of singing women? and why should thy servant be yet a burden to my lord the king? Thy servant goeth a little way over Jordan with the king; and why should the king recompense it to me with this reward? Let thy servant turn back again, I pray thee, that I may die in mine own city by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham: let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what seemeth good to thee. And the king said, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him what seemeth good to thee; and whatsoever thou shalt require of me I will do it for thee. And all the people went over Jordan, and when the king had gone over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him; and he returned to his own place. And the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him.

a *cf.* Ps. 90. 10.

(XIX. 40-XX. 36.)

The weakened kingdom. 4. (xix. 40-xx. 36.)

4. And all the people of Judah conducted the king over, and also half the people of Israel. And behold, [b]all the men of Israel came unto the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and brought the king and his household and all David's men with him, over Jordan? And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near [of kin] to me; and why then art thou angry for this matter? have we eaten at all at the king's cost? or has he given us any gift? And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, I have [c]ten parts in the king, and I have also more right than thou in David: why, then, hast thou despised me that my advice was not first had in bringing back my king? And the words of the men of Judah were [d]harsher than the words of the men of Israel.

b vv. 9 10.

c *cf.* 1 King. 11. 31.

d ch. 3. 1.

And there happened to be there a man of Belial,

to look, while the whole narrative seems part of a history of human failure and governmental dealings of God in view of it, such as its place in the book would intimate. We go on, not to scenes of peace and prosperity, but of fresh strife and sorrow. The very aim and purport of it all seems to be, how little the world can find from king or government, short of Christ's own rule. Since then it has been making long experiment as to the truth of this, hoping to prove it false, but has not.

4. Not yet has the king reached Jerusalem before there appears the shadow of that which, little more than a generation later, was to be the beginning of the end for Israel's independence. The strife between Israel and Judah breaks out in the very presence of the king; and Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, heads a fresh revolt against David. The men of Israel, gathered to do honor to David, follow him; and the spark of rebellion thus kindled threatens to grow into a speedy

and his name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a [e]Benjamite. And he blew the trumpet, and said, We have no [f]part in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel. And all the men of Israel went up from after David, [and] followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of [g]Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan to Jerusalem.

And David came unto his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the [h]ten women, his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and maintained them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood.

And the king said to [i]Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah in three days, and be thou here present. And Amasa went to assemble Judah; but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him. And David said to Abishai, Now will Sheba, the son of Bichri, do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants and pursue after him, lest he get him fortified cities, and escape out of our sight. And there went after him Joab's men and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the [j]mighty men; and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba, the son of Bichri.

When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came towards them. And Joab was girded with his coat, his dress, and over it the girdle of a sword fastened upon his loins in its sheath, and as he went forth, it fell out. And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in [k]health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand, to kiss him. And Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand; and he [l]smote him with it in the belly, and shed out his bowels on the ground, and struck him not again: and he died. And Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba, the son of Bichri. And one of Joab's young men stood by him, and said, He that favoreth Joab, and he that is for David, [let him go] after Joab. But Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway; and when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth over him, when he saw that every one that came by stood still. When he was removed out of the high-

[e] ch. 19. 16. ch. 16. 5.
[f] 1 Ki. 12. 16.
[g] ch. 2. 4.
[h] ch. 16. 21, 22.
[i] ch. 17. 25. ch. 19. 13.
[j] ch. 10. 7.
[k] *cf.* Ezek. 33. 31.
[l] ch. 3. 27. 1 Ki. 2. 5.

flame. The king calls Amasa to gather the tribe of Judah in pursuit of Sheba; but he is tardy, where everything depends on speed: David therefore intrusts Abishai with the commission to pursue Sheba at the head of his standing guard. The special troop of the dispossessed Joab goes with the rest, and Joab at the head of these. Here was at once material for discord again, and the murder of Amasa restores Joab to his old place at the head of the troops, where his success in the capture of Sheba keeps him. Politic and brave as he is unscrupulous, the figure of Joab dominates all this latter part of David's reign.

way, every man went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba, the son of Bichri.

And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berim, and they gathered together, and went also after him. And they came and besieged him in Abel-bethmaachah; and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood at the rampart; and all the people that were with Joab were sapping the wall to throw it down. And a wise woman cried out of the city, Hear, hear! say, I pray you, unto Joab, come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And he came near unto her, and the woman said, Art thou Joab? and he said, I am he. And she said unto him, Hear the words of thy handmaid; and he said, I do hear. And she spake, saying, They were wont to speak formerly, saying, They will surely inquire in Abel; and so they ended. I am of the [m]peaceful and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a [n]mother in Israel; why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of Jehovah? And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me to swallow up or destroy. The matter is not so, but a man of [o]mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, against David: [p]give him up only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

[m] ch. 2. 26.
[n] Judg. 5. 7.
[o] 1 Kl.11.26. 1 Sa. 14. 22. 1 Kl. 4. 8.
[p] cf. 1 Cor. 5. 6, 13.

This section terminates with another list of the officials under David, such as we have had already in the eighth chapter in connection with the most brilliant period of his history. It is natural to see in this later list the record of David's later years, and in the differences between the two, those which the lapse of time has made. But the question for us is, supposing this to be correct, is it a sufficient account of the matter? Is there any practical use — any significance worthy of consideration — in the two lists being given us? Are they intended for comparison? In an inspired history, can it be vain to imagine that spiritual interests are subserved by their place in it? Upon the answer given to such questions depends much of the value of these records to us, and of the attention they will meet with at our hands. If they are simply facts of history, let them be ever so accurate as facts, they will assuredly be of very little value for the generality of readers. If, on the other hand, it be true here, as with Scripture everywhere, that they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," at once our interest in them will be excited, and we shall examine them with an earnestness corresponding to our expectation of such results. If we believe in verbal inspiration,— as it is most certain Christ our Master did,— then we shall think no investigation too minute, too microscopic. Such a claim will not allow in us a mere indolent acceptance of it. It will produce an intelligent activity in the pursuit of truth which will require much from an inspired writing, and will assuredly be bitterly disappointed if results are not found to justify the claim.

We have already — partly, at least — examined the first list in its place, connected as it is with the first and glorious portion of David's reign, the history of which we have spoken as in some sense idealized in order that it might the better represent the higher glories of the one perfect kingdom. As so connected, it speaks of the character of that government in which the divine and human meet for the first time in absolute harmony. The second list, connected as distinctly

And the woman went unto all the people in her [q] wisdom; and they cut off the head of Sheba, the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

And [r] Joab was over all the host of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites; and Adoram was over the tribute; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; and Sheva was scribe; and Zadok and Abiathar were

[q] *cf.* Eccl. 9. 15.

[r] ch. 8. 15. ch. 23. 20.

with David's failure and sin, would seem as if it must intimate, in contrast with this, the failure of what is merely human; not, of course, in its worse forms (or there would be no lesson), but in its better,—not Absalom's but David's reign.

Yet the lists, after all, are very much alike,—too much, we might think, to serve any such purpose. They are the same list, with (as has been already said) such changes as the lapse of a few years might make. To see the differences fully we must take into account, not merely those of the names but of their places also,—numbers counting, as we know, for much. We must believe, in short, in inspiration as to every "jot" and "tittle"; and so believing, we shall not be disappointed.

(1.) The lists begin much alike:—"And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host"; "And Joab was over all the host of Israel." The significance of Joab, typically, lies in his name, as we have seen. Joab means "Jehovah is father"; and "son of Zeruiah" shows us this as the fruit of the cross. The one point of difference—most significant it is—between the two lists here is that in the second this last is omitted: *the cross as the foundation of all is removed.*

Now we are familiar with the fact that where atonement is denied the "fatherhood of God" may be yet insisted on, and indeed widened in its application to all, upon the natural basis of creation, the fall and its consequences being denied. Grace, faith, and a peculiar relationship of these to one another are thus necessarily set aside also: and this is evidently the condition of the best human governments, which, as governments of the world, cannot act upon Christian rules or principles, which are for Christians only. The omission in the second list is therefore the expression of a simple fact by which all governments to-day, however much Christian in profession, are distinguished from Christ's coming one. Look at the judgment of sheep and goats (Matt. xxv.), the judgment of the living when that kingdom is set up on earth,—and note the difference. Christians may be kings, judges, governors, they cannot any the more, *as such*, act in character as Christians; nor can they find in the New Testament a single word addressed to such. "My kingdom is not of this world" is decisive for the followers of Him who spake after this manner.

(2.) The second place in the second list is filled by "Benaiah the son of Jehoiada," who is "over the Cherethites, and over the Pelethites," that is, the "executioners and couriers." He is moved up from the *fifth* place on the first list to the second here: another important difference, though the name and office are the same; still more when we find "Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud the recorder," (literally, "the remembrancer,") with all that is implied here, displaced to a *fourth* position. Judgment is God's strange, however necessary, work: the fifth place, that of governmental recompense, is what plainly belongs to it. It is therefore here *out* of place, and *in* that of confirmation, help, salvation: it is an arm upon which the weakness of the kings of the earth has manifestly to support itself; and how often is judgment rendered merciless by this very weakness,—by the necessity of self-preservation. Divine government needs no such help.

(3.) In the third place of the first list are found the priests, plainly again in their proper order. Here they are *sixth*, three places lower down, while the third

priests; and Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

Retribution for the slaughter of the Gibeonites.

(XXI. 1-14.)

5. And there was a [s]famine in the days of David three years, year after year. And David [t]sought Jehovah's

[s] ch. 24. 1. Lev. 26. 26.
[t] 1 Kings 8. 37, 38.

place here (the number of manifestation and glory) is filled by an officer entirely unknown in the former list, and the cause of woeful disaster at a later day, "Adoram," who is "over the tribute." Who can fail to see the significance of the priest (the intercessor and mediator) giving way to the tax-collector? And who can but realize the burden of the best human governments in this respect, compared with the mercy of the divine? Here is a difference, central and pervasive.

Adoniram, "my lord is exalted," is here contracted, probably by the popular mouth, into Adoram, "their glorifying."

(4.) Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud is still "recorder" or "remembrancer," but now in the *fourth* place, that of weakness and failure; while—

(5.) Instead of Seraiah, "Jah has dominion," Sheva is scribe: whose name is taken generally to mean "vanity." Because the world has, as far as possible, escaped from under the dominion of Jah, vanity is written upon it.

(6.) Under the sixth head are found, with shorn honors, Zadok and Abiathar, the priests; the number that in which the uprise of evil is indicated, being the exact opposite of that which belongs to them of right. Priest, as we see, is far separate from king here, while in the perfect rule at last these shall be joined together. The one who is *over* shall be the one who is *for* his people, and nothing shall be able to separate these things any more forever.

(7.) Lastly, under the number of rest, Ira the Jairite is named as a chief ruler; the names being suggestively significant of the opposite of rest, as "watcher, the enlightener." How clearly is indicated the disturbed condition of the world's kingdoms, with their constant restlessness and suspicion of change. This perfects the vivid picture: and yet it describes not a Saul's rule, but a David's!

Certainly, slight as has been the present sketch of it, we have no reason to doubt that the two official lists here are in designed and significant contrast with one another. Yet their meaning is not blazoned on their front, but indicated by slight touches, and left to be brought out by such inquiry as seems never to have been given them; one reason for this, however, being plainly neglect of that symbolism of numbers which, however it may be ignored, yet runs through Scripture and illumines it. If a worthy search were made, it would be found, I doubt not, that instead of exaggerating the importance of this, all that has been said in its behalf has been far too little.

The lists manifestly seal the interpretation of the several portions of this history of David, the typical and the natural, which it is according to the purpose of the book to put in contrast. It is, as we find, really a book of the "kingdoms," in which the higher is always in contrast with the lower, until He come who joins them together; and here David, greater than himself, bids us look on in faith to what has been in the mind of God from the beginning. Into this the kingdoms of the world will never grow: they will pass away, that the kingdom of the heavens may replace them. He shall come whose right it is, and God will give it Him.

5. The last section of this subdivision is an appendix to the previous history. *When* what is narrated here took place we are not informed, but the very vagueness of the specification, "in the days of David," implies that it is not in continuity with the things we have been looking at. It is classed with them because of its similar moral bearing, not because of its connection in time. Its theme, like theirs, is the government of God; and, as another "fifth," emphasizes responsibility as under this government, which the failure manifestly (and in very real connection thus with the preceding history) confirms very solemnly.

There is a famine for three years, year after year, which *at last*—for it takes

face. And Jehovah said, It is for Saul and for his bloody house; because he slew the [u]Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the children of Israel had sworn to them; and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.) And David said unto the Gibeonites, [v]What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of Jehovah? And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you. And they said to the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any region of Israel, let seven men of his [w]sons be given up to us, and we will hang them to Jehovah in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of Jehovah. And the king said, I will give them. And the king [x]spared

[u] Josh. 9.26.
[v] *ctr.* ver. 1.
[w] *ctr.* Ezek. 18. 20.
[x] 1 Sam. 20. 16.

three years to do it — drives David to God to inquire the cause. He is answered that "it is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." A deed of the past reign is thus charged against the present, the deed of a former king upon the whole people of Israel. They were responsible as the people of God for having suffered the iniquity, profited by it, perhaps, — gone on, at least, without any acknowledgment or repentance for it.

With the history of the Gibeonites we are well acquainted. They were of the original inhabitants of the land, and had gained, by deceit, exemption from the doom which these were under. An oath by Jehovah had been given them that they should live, and thus the name of the Lord was pledged for their preservation. Saul, however, "in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah," had sought to destroy them, and had actually slain some.

The motive is given at its best, designedly. Without questioning the motives which might have been hidden under the ostensible one, nothing of this sort could avail to remove the dishonor from the Lord's name which they had permitted to remain there. The famine showed that, spite of the time that had elapsed, He had not forgotten nor could pass over this; and this should have instruction for us in the ways of God, and give us to realize our need of exercise with regard to them.

But here again David seems sadly to forget the privilege of which he has just availed himself; and having turned to the Lord for the *cause* of the judgment, he turns to the *Gibeonites* to learn the method of atonement. "David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of Jehovah?" Surely that was not, after all, the first consideration; and to put himself into the hands of those who had been wronged was not in reality the way of righting it. Was there then no law in Israel which would apply to such a case? And if there were none, how much more had they need to seek from the highest Wisdom for help in a matter so exceptional as this?

Instead of which he makes an absolute promise, "What ye shall say, that will I do for you," and then on hearing their demand for seven of Saul's sons to be hung up to Jehovah in Gibeah of Saul, he still answers, "I will give them." There is no sign of any fresh appeal to God in the matter; and indeed there is no need of it to refuse the Gibeonite request. It had been already distinctly announced in Israel's statute-book: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of Jehovah's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. And the king took the two sons of [y] Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of [z] Merab] the daughter of Saul, which she bare to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite, and he gave them up into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they [a] hanged them on the hill before Jehovah. And they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the first days of harvest, in the beginning of barley harvest.

And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took [b] sackcloth,

y ch. 3. 7.

z *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 19.

a De. 21. 23.

b ch. 3. 31.

*neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers:* every man shall be put to death for *his own* sin." (Deut. xxiv. 16.) In Ezekiel xviii., long after this, when the children of Israel were perverting similarly the utterances of the law itself, God solemnly reasserts the principle of Deuteronomy, in vindication of the righteousness of His ways: "As I live, saith the Lord God: ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: *the soul that sinneth*, it shall die."

It is impossible, therefore, to quote Numbers xxxv. 33 against this,—a passage which in itself is as plain as need be. True, "the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it"; but "the blood of him that shed it" means the very opposite of the blood of his descendants. The word of God does not so contradict itself; and the Spirit of God emphatically disowns the principle.

True, the actual shedder of this blood had passed from the reach of human judgment-seats, and there was a difficulty in this that only God could meet. The Gibeonites sought to meet it honestly, no doubt, but according to the common maxims of blood-revenge, as it obtained among the nations round about, and which the whole legislation as to the cities of refuge had replaced and shut out for the people of God. That these had admitted them again is more than probable, and as here, they would naturally seek to throw the solemn sanctions of the law around them. Scripture does not ordinarily comment upon such things, but leaves us with the word of God in our hands to disentangle the confusion, and pass judgment for ourselves according to God.

Some have thought that the first verse of the chapter here shows us Saul's "bloody house" as being really involved with him in the guilt of the Gibeonite slaughter. In a certain way this, no doubt, was true. As the blood-stain rested upon the whole nation until cleansed away, so especially did it rest upon the house of Saul. Upon them it rested specially to do what might be done in reparation, and by unmistakable manifestation of sorrow and humiliation for the crime before God. *Individuals* of Saul's house might have been really accessories to it; but then their guilt as that would be specific and individual: and *we find no such charges brought.* It is not likely that the children of Merab were such; it seems very certain that Mephibosheth was not; and yet he is spared, not in virtue of his innocence, but because of David's sworn covenant with Jonathan his friend. This shows that, *as to the others*, it was not a question of personal guilt. The Gibeonite requisition was "seven of Saul's sons,"—no matter who. David looks round and selects out of those so indicated. The specification of number, like all else, shows what is in their mind. They all, and David most, follow their own thoughts, and neither go to God nor are governed by His word. As we must surely read it, it is again the failure of human government, even where recognizing the divine one,—blindness in the things of God, for which the causes are spiritual, and alas, deep as they are wide.

The pathetic action of Rizpah seems to have a place here beyond that which

and spread it for her on the rock from the beginning of harvest until water should be poured upon them out of the heavens, and suffered neither the bird of the heavens to rest on them by day, nor the beast of the field by night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. And David went and [c]took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the lords of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the open place of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa; and he brought up thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that had been hanged. And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the land of Ben-

[c] 1 Sam. 31. 11-13.

the ordinary interpretation of the whole matter can assign it. The bodies are left, contrary to the law with regard to those hanged,—the only law which we know in such a case (Deut. xxi. 22, 23),—hanging day and night before God. The reason that has been suggested for this (as by Keil and others) is that "this law had, however, no application whatever to the case before us, where the expiation of guilt that rested upon the whole land is concerned. In this instance the expiatory sacrifices were to remain exposed before Jehovah, till the cessation of the plague showed that His wrath had been appeased." This, as a human account of why they left them there, is no doubt the truth. That it had any ground in the law, or therefore in the right reason of things, is another matter. The tentative character of the whole proceeding, on the contrary, has no mark of God's dictation, as it is against the whole spirit of the law. God never ordains a way of approach to Him, and at the same time brands it as of doubtful efficacy. He never appointed a sacrifice, and bade the offerer wait until he found out if it were acceptable. How different the positiveness of His word from the uncertain speculations of the wisest of men!

The thought to which Keil gives expression is easily gathered from Rizpah's action, who "spread sackcloth for her upon the rock until water *should be* poured upon them out of the heavens." So I think we must translate the words, not as the record of fact but of expectation. The *fact* does not seem to have answered to the expectation; for it was after the bones were buried, with those of Saul and Jonathan, that "God was entreated for the land," or, in other words, that the drought ceased.

This, however, sets aside the efficacy of the act itself, and brings Rizpah into corresponding prominence: Rizpah, whose act with the whole force of the motherly instinct, refuses participation in the awful doom, and with her feeble womanly strength would shelter the victims. Strangely enough, while she protects them from the birds of prey, she is herself a daughter of Aiah, "vulture," or "kite,"—in either case one of the keenest-eyed of these. And, while she refuses this sacrifice, her own name, Rizpah, is that of the "live coal," which, taken by the seraph from off the altar, purges the unclean lips of the prophet! (Isa. vi. 6, 7.) Is this *double* reference to the matter in hand only a double accident? Rizpah does even prepare the way for blessing, touching the heart of David to do what poor justice can even yet be done to the dishonored dead, with whom Saul and Jonathan themselves come into remembrance also. The keen eye that sees things as they are, the glow of living righteousness, are with this stricken woman, not with king David or the Gibeonites in this matter; and not till things are set right here can God be entreated for the land!

What, then, is the lesson here but the failure, as already said, of human government, even when, aroused by the divine acts, it addresses itself to the settle-

jamin, in Zelah in the sepulchre of [d]Kish his father; and they performed all that the king commanded; and after that God was entreated for the land.

[d] 1 Sam. 9. 1.

## DIVISION 6. (Chap. xxi. 15–xxiv.)

*Overcoming.*

(XXI. 15-22.)

The seed of the giant.

1. (15-17.) Ishbibenob: the "dweller in Nob."

1. [1] AND the [e]Philistines had war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines; and David became [f]faint. And Ishbibenob, who was of the children of the giant, the [g]weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of brass, he being girded with a new [sword], thought to have slain David. And [h]Abi-

[e] ch. 5. 17-19.
[f] *ctr.* Josh. 14. 11. Ju. 8. 4.
[g] 1 Sam. 17. 7.
[h] ch. 23. 18.

ment of the most fundamental questions? — the endeavor to fulfill righteousness ending in the most complete unrighteousness, and the blind effort to please God in the refusal of His plainest commandments, — a woman's heart seeing clearly, with instinctive wisdom, what the king of Israel, with his delight in the law of God, is utterly blind to. How more than ever it is plain that one hand alone can rightly wield the sceptre of the world! How it shows us the moral of the book to be in the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

DIV. 6.

The book is not suffered to close in mere distress. Even the present evil is not without its good: for God is good, and Master in every scene and circumstance. This is the closing lesson here: the number of this division is that of mastery, of overcoming; and not only is it God who overcomes, but man also, wherever taught of Him. Faith is the spirit of the overcomer; it is the assurance of victory: "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." In the midst of difficulties and trials such as sin has occasioned, faith finds its exercise and opportunity; as Adullam showed itself in David's time the training-school of heroes. Here let us notice, however, that, as soon as we come once more to the bright side of the history, the typical meaning is that which alone gives it illumination. How much interest is there for us in these conquerors of giants and troops of aliens, except as we read in them the spiritual lessons which everywhere make Scripture what it is? This is the value and glory of the allegorizing method of interpretation, which Scripture itself insists upon and illustrates so fully. Let those who make little of it show us how else the same results "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," can be attained.

1. The first series of overcomings here is of the seed of Rapha or the giant, the kindred of Goliath of Gath, met and overcome, as *he* was, in the wars with the Philistines. The notion of a giant in Scripture is always connected with evil, the lifting up of man against God, the symbol of pride and self-sufficiency, as well as of oppressive power. He is the opposite of the little and the lowly, the humble in heart, with whom God delights to dwell; but thus may stand for the tyranny of a lust, as in the case of Og, or of a Satanic delusion, as with Goliath himself. In those before us we must see, what we have seen in their kinsman, the monstrous delusions which abide in a system of error such as Philistinism depicts, the ecclesiastical "mystery of lawlessness" of Christian times.

(i.) Of these Ishbibenob may well represent the grand pretension, foundation and support of every other error. The name means, according to the lexicons, "his seat (or dwelling) is at Nob," while Nob is generally given as "hill," from *nabah*, "to be prominent," not used in scriptural Hebrew. But there is another *nabah*, which is in frequent use, and from which *nabi*, "prophet," is derived: so that Nob may be more probably rendered "prophecy"; a not unsuitable name for the priestly town which Saul desolated, where the high priest had lived, and from which, therefore, divine oracles were given.

shai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and smote the Philistine, and slew him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go out [t]no more with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel.

2. (18.) Saph. [2]And it was so after this, that there was [j]again a battle with the Philistines at Gob, when Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, who was of the children of the giant.

[t] ch. 18. 3.

[j] ch. 5. 22.

When we find, therefore, in the Thyatiran assembly, which those skilled in Apocalyptic interpretation do not doubt to foreshadow the Romish church, "the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess," and realize how much is based for Romanism on the claim of divine inspiration for the church, we need not wonder that Ishbibenob should be the first Philistine giant for faith to overcome. And here it is intelligible why Abishai the son of Zeruiah should have to succor David and slay the giant. Abishai is the "source of gift," which is Christ risen, but thus the fruit of the cross (of which Zeruiah speaks), but which, more than anything in Christianity perhaps, the church of Rome sets aside and dishonors by constantly repeated offerings which make it vain. "For Christ is not entered into the *holy places made with hands*, which are the figures of the true,"—into which Rome's masses would keep Him continually entering,—"but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; NOR YET THAT HE SHOULD OFFER HIMSELF OFTEN, . . . *for then must He often have suffered* since the foundation of the world,"—which yet they agree He has not; "but now ONCE in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. ix. 24-26.)

No offering without suffering, then; one offering once offered putting sin away; a Christ gone into heaven, not entering into holy places made with hands; and He "the father of *gift*" to His ransomed Church! Whereas in Rome none of these things are found,—Rome that would force Him to multiply His work on countless altars, put Him into the foul hands of worthless priests to answer to their wills, and as the sure result deny to His people all true knowledge of forgiveness, and, instead of "gift," *sell* them their meager pittances of church absolution, unavailing to keep them from paying in purgatory at last "the uttermost farthing."

No wonder that when Abishai comes to help in the strife, Ishbibenob's "new" sword should be unavailing! New-forged it is, for all the antiquity of which it boasts, and not "the sword of the Spirit, which is the saying of God." This sword it cannot and dare not handle.

(ii.) Saph, as in common use in Hebrew, denotes "basin," or "door, threshold," and this (I suppose) is commonly accepted as the meaning of the second giant's name. Young, however, gives "preserver"; while Simonis, collating with the Ethiopic, translates "extended, long, tall." If its derivation be from *saphah*, however, a meaning emerges so entirely in agreement with the connection here that we cannot hesitate to prefer it. *Saphah* has two meanings, opposed to one another, and yet in perfect spiritual harmony: it means either "to add," or "to take away." Saph may in this way stand for "addition," or "subtraction."

Now, in the case of Ishbibenob, we have had before us the false claim of modern Philistinism to the inspiration of the prophet,—to be the infallible oracle of God; and we should naturally expect in his brother giant to find some related pretension. Certainly, then, nothing is more nearly related to the claim of infallibilty than that of "adding" from time to time to the authoritative standard of Christian truth. Thus the apocryphal books were added to the canonical; tradition was added to Scripture; and doctrines many have been successively added to the creed of Rome, as the centuries have moved on. Saph is thus clearly another Philistine giant in close affinity with Ishbibenob. That these "additions"

3. (19.) Lahmi.

[3]And again there was a battle in Gob with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of [Jair] smote [Lahmi the brother* of] [k]Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

k *cf.* 1 Chr. 20. 5.

* The bracketed words are from 1 Chron. xx. 5. The common text of Samuel has inserted: "Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, smote." See the notes.

are real "subtractions" from the authority of Scripture, no one instructed in the Word can doubt. They are used to subvert some of its plainest teachings, as well as to take it out of the hands generally of the adherents of Rome. The numerical structure, again, is in perfect agreement with this meaning, as is plain: the number two is at once the number of addition and contradiction.

The slayer of the giant is more difficult to interpret; but "entanglement from Jah" seems to be the most satisfactory meaning of Sibbechai, and which would not be unsuited in application here: for this contradiction of what is added to what they are made to supplement is indeed an entanglement from which the Romanist cannot escape. His "universal consent of the Church" cannot be found. "Fathers" contradict "fathers"; councils are against councils; pope against pope. It is only by bridling the witnesses that any evidence in favor of consent can be made to appear. Sibbechai is thus fairly the overcomer of Saph, and the type so read has consistency of meaning.

(iii.) In the case of the third giant the text of Chronicles is against that of Samuel, which seems to be an alteration from the other. In Samuel "Jaare-oregim," which means "forests of the weavers," does not seem like the name of a man; while in Chronicles Elhanan is called the "son of *Jair*," and the "oregim" ("weavers") may have crept in from the after-part of the sentence. It is *possible*, of course, that there may have been another Goliath the Gittite beside the one slain by David, but not very likely that Elhanan should have slain both him and (as in Chronicles) his brother also, and that these two exploits should be told separately, one in each book; while *Beth-halahmi*, "the Bethlehemite," in the one, comes suggestively near to "eth Lahmi"—Lahmi, in the objective case—in the other passage. Altogether, Chronicles would seem to give the correct text, though the Septuagint maintains both. A measure of uncertainty seems thus to be thrown over either reading, while some critics still hold to Samuel in preference to the other.

The numerical structure unites, however, here with the spiritual meaning to approve that text of Chronicles, which on other grounds and by the most satisfactory criticism is accepted as the true one. We must remember, as our guide in interpretation, that we are still in the line of the Philistine giant here. In this case Lahmi, which means "my bread," and under the number of sanctification,—*consecrated* bread, brings before us another of the gigantic errors of the Roman Babylon, and makes, with all that we have had before of these Philistine types, the picture well-nigh complete. A very small thing in itself may seem the matter of consecrated bread, but who knows not how largely it bulks in Rome's idolatrous system? *Her* consecrated bread becomes, by that very fact, as she blasphemously asserts, the very flesh and blood, soul and divinity of Christ Himself; and upon every altar every priest of hers, with a grossness that is perhaps nowhere else equaled, makes and then eats the god he worships!

The special notice of relationship here may at first sight not be intelligible. Why should Lahmi be pointed out as the "brother of Goliath the Gittite," rather than Saph or Ishbibenob, who seem alike to have been his brethren? Remembering what Goliath stands for, the awful distance from God which is the fruit of unappeased wrath against sin, the magical results of consecration of the bread, however insane and evil in their nature, may seem little akin to this. In fact, it will be found that they are specially near akin. No part of Romanism more than this enables the Church to shadow the consciences of its devotees with awe

4. (20–22.) The six-fingered.

The song of deliverance.

1. (xxii.) The identification of David and Christ.

a.(1–4.) God the rock of faith.

[k]And again there was a battle in Gath, and there was a man of [great] stature, who had on each hand [l]six fingers, and on each foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant. And when he [m]defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him. These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

2. [1](*a*) And David spake unto Jehovah the words of this [n]song, in the day that Jehovah had delivered him out

*l cf.* 1 Sam. 17. 4. Prov. 30. 6.

*m* 1 Sam. 17 10. Ps. 42. 10.

*n* 1 Sam. 2. 1, etc. Ex. 15. 1, etc. Ps. 18.

and mystery, and subject mind and heart to a tyranny which knows no compassion, and whose penal sanctions are gathered from time and eternity alike.

Hence the destroyer of Lahmi is Elhanan, "God hath shown grace," and he the son of Jair, who "awakens." These two things, a soul awake and established in the grace of God, give deliverance from the visions and the terrors of darkness. It only needs courage to approach such spectres, and they vanish.

(iv.) The fourth giant has no name, but is distinguished by his form. The numeral (4) would indicate that we come now to practical walk, and a nearer view confirms this. The hands speak of work; the feet of walk: in both respects there is something supernumerary, like a sixth finger or a sixth toe, and this is eminently characteristic of Romish piety*; the "*religious*" life is something more than needful, and not *super-* but *un*natural. It has not victory over the world, but flees it. It calls marriage a sacrament, but refuses it as a profanation; while another "sacrament"—penance—is only obtainable through sin! The number 5 is that of the feeble creature (4) with the almighty Creator (1), and of this the hands and feet, in their normal condition, bear witness; but this Romish 6, the number of Antichrist, destroys this relation: the creature walks not with his Creator, but subject to every kind of human and invented rule; and conscience is not before God but man. Thus again the destroyer of this perversion of nature is that which brings in God and His unrepented-of goodness to His creatures,—Jonathan, "Jehovah"—the Unchangeable—"has given"; and he the son of Shimea, "hearkening,"—obedience to God alone. Here the series of giants and their overcomers alike is ended.

2. We have now David's song of the deliverance to come, to which his "last words" are a necessary sequel. The first is, with but slight differences here and there, identical with the eighteenth psalm, and has, of course, the character of the psalms, in which prophecy is, as generally in the historic books also, typical, not formal, not announced as such, but is developed by the Spirit of God out of experiences in the soul and in the practical life, which are used as men use earth-distances to measure the heavens. In this, therefore, the *identity* between type and antitype is used and drawn out, while in the "last words" we have the *contrast* between these: they are distinguished from one another. We know well that both these things are needed throughout such histories, and require careful adjustment. The one encourages us by present realization of the blessing to come; the other prevents unfounded expectations from this, and carries us on in patience of hope to the divine fulfillment.

(i.) The character of the psalm already spoken of accounts for a necessary dimness of outline when applied simply to David and the circumstances of his life and reign. These seem often exaggerated, and so far falsified, and the language used is often brought forward to disprove the Davidic reference, or else is ascribed to mere oriental hyperbolism. In this way the word of God is dishonored doubly, and a principle established by which all prophecy is degraded by mean and trivial interpretations, which are justified by the plea of eastern conceptions and manners of thought. It is plain that the question comes to be whether

* "*Ad majorem Dei gloriam*,—"for the *greater* glory of God,"—the motto of the Jesuits, would illustrate this.—(S. R.)

of the grasp of all his enemies, and out of the grasp of
°Saul. And he said,—
Jehovah is my ᵖrock, and my fortress, and my ᵍdeliverer!
My God, my rock, in him do I ʳtrust;
My ˢshield and the ᵗhorn of my salvation, my ᵘhigh tower and my ᵛrefuge:
My ʷsaviour! from violence thou savest me.
I call upon Jehovah who is ˣworthy to be praised,
And I am saved from mine enemies.

*o ctr.* 1 Sa. 27. 1.
*p* De. 32. 4. Ps. 28. 1.
*q* Ps. 34. 3.
*r* Ps. 16. 1.
*s* Ps. 84. 11. Ps. 119.114. Gen. 15. 1.
*t* Luke 1. 69.
*u* Prov. 18. 10.
*v* Ps. 46. 1.
*w* Is. 45. 21.
*x cf.* Rev. 4. 11. Rev. 5. 12.

*b.* (5-7.) The sorrows of death.

(*b*) For the ʸwaves of death had compassed me:
The streams of Belial made me afraid.
The cords of Sheol surrounded me:
The snares of death confronted me.
In my ᶻstrait I called upon Jehovah:
Even on my God I called;
And he ᵃheard from his temple my voice,
And my cry was in his ears.

*y* Ps. 42. 7.
*z* Ps. 107. 6.
*a* Ps. 34. 6.

*c.* (8-20.) The manifestation of God.

(*c*) And the earth ᵇshook and trembled,
The foundations of the heavens moved,
Yea, were shaken, because he was wroth.

*b* Ps. 114. 7.

Scripture is the word of Him that cannot lie, or the very fallible word of men who had not even learned the soberness of nineteenth century thought and diction. No true faith will hesitate for a moment in its answer to this.

We propose a fuller examination of the psalm when, the Lord willing, we come to it in the book of Psalms. It will be sufficient here, therefore, to indicate its general meaning. There are seven sections, beginning and ending with the praise of God as the rock of faith and the great Deliverer of His people. Between these two we have the sufferings and deliverance of David from His enemies idealized and enlarged so as to speak of the Great Sufferer and the deliverance in which we rejoice all, and forever shall rejoice, culminating in the rule of an absolutely righteous King over both Israel and the Gentiles: One whom in this character David will presently assure us he too little resembles. To this rule we yet look forward and not backward: it is, thank God,—though David's may be the shadow of it,—not a memory of the past but a vision of the future.

(*a.*) Like the song of Moses, the song of David begins and ends with God. Every true song must. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things"; and there can be no true joy which does not recognize the truth of this. In the flux and reflux of things here, God is alone what His name Jehovah recognizes, the One abiding. If the permanency of natural laws alone saves us from confusion of mind and uncertainty as to all our actions, the abiding confidence and security of faith are that God is a rock. The deliverances of one's life are but the freshly emphasized assurances of this: the refuge remains to us while the storm still rages; the Voice that calms it says to our importunate cry, "O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?"

(*b.*) In the second part David, hunted by Saul, is only the foreground of a darker picture in which Messiah may be discerned in Gethsemane and on the cross. With David the deliverance was *from* death, for the Lord *out* of death; and such a death as for a righteous man had not a likeness. Here the indefiniteness of details helps the fuller application.

(*c.*) But, in the third section, and with the resurrection of Christ before us, we find it still more impossible to stop short of Christ. The bauded powers of

A [c]smoke arose from his nostrils:
And fire out of his mouth devoured;
Coals were kindled at it.
And he [d]bowed the heavens and came down,
And thick [e]darkness under his feet.
And he rode upon a [f]cherub, and did fly,
And was seen on the [g]wings of the wind.
And he made darkness pavilions round him,
Gathering of waters, thick clouds of the skies.
At the brightness before him
Were kindled [h]coals of fire.
Jehovah from heaven [i]thundered,
And the [j]Highest uttered his voice;
And he [k]sent out arrows and scattered them,—
Lightning, and discomfited them.
And the [l]channels of the sea appeared,—
The foundations of the world were discovered,—
By Jehovah's [m]rebuke,
By the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
He reached from on high, he took me,
He [n]drew me out of many waters.
He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From them that hated me—for they were [o]too strong for me.
They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But Jehovah was my [p]stay.
And he brought me forth into a [q]large place:
He delivered me, for he [r]delighted in me.

c Ex. 19. 18.
d Is. 64. 1.
e Ps. 97. 2. 1 Ki. 8. 12. cf. 1 Tim. 6. 16.
f Ps. 80. 1.
g Ps. 104. 3.
h ver. 9.
i 1 Sam. 2. 10. 1 Sam. 12. 17. Ps. 29. 3.
j Ps. 7. 17.
k Hab. 3. 11.
l Ex. 15. 19.
m Ps. 106. 9. Is. 50. 2.
n Jonah 2. 3–6.
o Ps. 3. 1.
p Ps. 55. 22.
q Ps. 118. 5. Ps. 66. 17. cf. Eph. 2. 6.
r Num. 14. 8.

*d*, (21–28.) Tested and approved.

(*d*) Jehovah hath [s]rewarded me according to my righteousness,
According to the [t]cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
For I have [u]kept Jehovah's ways,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his [v]judgments were before me,
And as to his statutes I did not depart from them.
I was also perfect before him,
And [w]kept myself from mine iniquity.
And Jehovah hath recompensed me according to my righteousness,—
According to my cleanness before his eyes.
With the [x]merciful thou showest thyself merciful;

s Ps. 7. 8.
t Ps. 24. 4.
u Prov. 8. 32.
v Ps. 119. 7, 30.
w cf. 1 John 5. 18, with 1 Pet. 1. 5.
x cf. Lev. 26. 21.

earth and hell were there scattered; the quaking ground and the rent graves bore witness to the intervention of God. There is nothing in this description which cannot be, without strain, applied to the true David, the Beloved, who could indeed say, "He delivered me because He delighted in me."

(*d*.) In the fourth section, under the number of testing and practical walk, we have the reason for God's intervention, and the justification of His delight. And here the clear and emphasized declaration of righteousness suits, in fact, only One. He alone could say of God, "I do *always* the things that please Him"; and this is, above all else, what is needed for the King that God approves, and

With the perfect thou showest thyself perfect;
With the pure thou showest thyself pure;
And with the perverse thou showest thyself tortuous.
Yea, a people that is [y]low thou [f]savest,
But thine eyes are on the [z]lifted up to bring them low.

*y* 1 Sam. 2. 7, 8.
*z* Dan. 4. 37.

*e.* (29–43.) The judgment of the nations.

(*e*) For thou art my [a]lamp, Jehovah;
Yea, Jehovah enlighteneth my darkness.
For by thee I run through a troop,
And by my God I leap over a wall.
[As for] God, his [b]way is perfect:
Jehovah's saying is proved;
A [c]shield is he to all that trust in him.
For who is God, beside Jehovah?
And who a [d]Rock, beside our God?
God is my fortress of strength,
And directeth the perfect in his way.
He maketh his feet like [e]hinds',
And maketh me stand on my high places.
He [f]teacheth my hands to war,
And mine arms bend a bow of brass.
Yea, thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation,
And thy [g]gentleness hath made me great.
Thou hast made room for my steps beneath me,
And my ankles have not [h]wavered.
I have [i]pursued mine enemies and destroyed them,
Nor [j]turned back till they were consumed.
And I have consumed them, and dashed them in pieces:
And they did not arise, but fell under my feet.
Yea, thou [k]girdedst me with strength for the battle;
Thou subduedst under me those that rose up against me.
And thou hast [l]made mine enemies to turn their backs on me,
That I might destroy them that hate me.
They looked, but none was there to save,
To Jehovah, but he answered them not.
And I [m]beat them small as the dust of the earth,
I stamped them as the mire of the streets, I spread them out.

*a* Ps. 119. 105.
*b* De. 32. 4.
*c* ver. 3. Prov. 30. 5.
*d* ver. 2. Is. 26. 4.
*e* Hab. 3. 19.
*f* Ps. 144. 1.
*g* Ps. 103. 4, 13.
*h* Ps. 73. 2. Ps. 37. 31.
*i* 1 Sam. 17. 52.
*j* *cf.* 2 Ki. 13. 18, 19.
*k* Eph. 6. 14.
*l* Ps. 9. 3.
*m* Ps. 2. 9.

the world needs. Spite of what might be the general character of David's reign, we know well that he could not pretend to this. Here, again, David was but the shadow, and not the perfect image of the true.

(*e.*) Now we have the execution of judgment, and the putting of enemies under His feet, and thus from the resurrection go on to the appearing of Christ. We have but to look at the book of Revelation to see how the Lamb will be the warrior; and this is in accord with Isaiah and the prophets generally. Not only is the Lion of the tribe of Judah the Lamb slain, but the Lamb slain is no less the Lion. We think this in opposition, perhaps, to the character of Christ, while yet we recognize that all judgment is given to Him because He is the Son of man. Judgment is what the world needs and must have. Those that destroy the earth

*f.* (44–49.) The rod of power.

(*f*) Thou hast also delivered me from the [n]strivings of my people,
And hast preserved me to be [o]head of the nations:
A people I had [p]not known serve me.
Strangers cringe to me,
As soon as they hear, they hearken to me.
Strangers [q]fade away,
And are afraid out of their close places.
Jehovah [r]liveth, and blessed be my rock,
And exalted be God, the rock of my salvation!
The God that [s]avengeth me
And bringeth down the peoples under me.
And bringeth me forth from mine enemies,
And thou hast exalted me above my adversaries,
Thou hast [t]delivered me from the man of violence.

*g.* (50, 51.) Praises.

(*g*) Therefore will I give [u]thanks unto thee, Jehovah, among the nations,
And will sing praise unto thy name.
[He is] the tower of salvation for his [v]king,
And showeth mercy to his anointed,
To David and his seed for [w]evermore.

2. (xxiii. 1–7.) The contrast between David and Christ.

[2]And these are the [x]last words of David:—
David [y]the son of Jesse saith,
Even the man [z]raised up on high saith,
The [a]anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the [b]sweet psalmist of Israel:—
The [c]Spirit of Jehovah spake in me,
And his word was on my tongue.

*n cf.* Is. 11. 1, 13.
*o cf.* Is. 49. 6, 7.
*p cf.* Is. 55.5. *cf.* Ps. 72. 9–11.
*q cf.* Micah 7. 16, 17.
*r cf.* Ex. 3. 14.
*s* De. 32. 35.
*t* Ps. 86. 14–17.
*u* De. 32. 43. Rom. 15. 9.
*v cf.* Ps. 2.6.
*w* Acts 13. 34. Ps. 72. 7,17.
*x* Ps. 72. 20.
*y* Ruth 4. 17–22. *cf.* De.26.5.
*z* 1 Sam.2.8.
*a* 1 Sam. 16. 13.
*b cf.* Ps. 45. 1, 2.
*c* Acts 13. 33–35.

must be destroyed. Love can strike in behalf of the loved. And here again the judgment goes beyond the type in David, to reach the Antitype.

(*f.*) Finally here we have One delivered from the strivings of "My people" (Israel), and becoming the Head of the nations. Power is there before which all must bow, even strangers in heart, who finally are exposed and doomed: "Strangers fade away, and are afraid out of their close places." It is to be remembered that the spirit here is Davidic and not Solomonic,—righteous rule putting down evil, rather than the peace that follows it. As a consequence —

(*g.*) The seventh section is rather indicated than outlined. The continuance of blessing is "to David and his seed for evermore,"—the maintenance of the throne in the hands to which it has been trusted. Safe and blessed hands we know these are, and rest to the heart it is to recognize them: but we read this into the picture from elsewhere; we must go elsewhere to find it.

(ii.) David's last words, as already said, show us what the song does not, the contrast between type and antitype; and there is correspondingly much greater brightness. It is when David becomes simply a Voice like the Baptist, to speak of Another, that all the sweetness and melody and divine character of this voice is found. David reminds us here of his own lowly origin, and of the grace that raised him up. He is the anointed of the God of *Jacob*, the One whose glory it is to bring out of the poorest material a vessel for His praise. *As* the anointed thus, he is rather Israel's "sweet psalmist" than her king. And so assuredly our hearts deem of him: what is the king in comparison with the psalmist? And no wonder: for here David is but the channel through which God's own living water has flowed to the lips of the thirsty ever since: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake in me; and His word was on my tongue."

The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
A [d]righteous Ruler over men,
A ruler in the [e]fear of God;—
Even as the [f]morning-light when the sun ariseth,
A morning [g]without clouds:
From the brightness after [h]rain
The [i]herb [springeth] from the earth.

d Ps. 45. 7. Is. 32. 1, 2.
e Is. 11. 1, 2.
f *cf.* Mal. 4. 2.
g *cf.* Is. 30. 26.
h Ps. 72. 6.
i Is. 35. 1, 2.

Sweeter now therefore than the former utterance, though it may be the same theme still, is this of a "righteous Ruler over men, a ruler in the fear of God!" It is now not even simply the Spirit of God speaking through the experiences and in the faith of a divinely constituted instrument, but a direct revelation: "the Rock of Israel spake to me." Upon that divine revelation David himself rests in faith amid all within and around that may seem adverse to it.

Yet the vision is abrupt, enigmatical; not in itself, indeed, but in its application. This it receives from the lips of the dying king, with the sunset radiance in his eyes. As the world darkens heaven brightens: can he mistake whence the darkness, whence the brightness, is? We shall hear presently his testimony.

"A righteous ruler over man!
A ruler in the fear of God!"

The second thing is here the first foundation of character, as is plain: the only morality worth calling that is the fruit of godliness; the creature place truly kept, the right relation of a soul with its Creator insures all other relations to be right.

When we consider WHO it is that will fulfill this, we may well be amazed. The Word made flesh, a Divine Being in this creature place to teach us the goodness of it: not simply on the throne, but filling the lowliest places on the road to this, which is the reward of absolute perfection in all these; proved Master of Himself, and so fit to be, as none else, the Master of others. And there is much more than this behind it, a deeper depth than ever known by a righteous man beside, a motive of divine love to reach and bring up the captives of sin and the heirs of death, and bring them by his sacrifice to glory!

What must be the kingdom of such a king? Is there — has there ever been — a kingdom of earth that could be in anything but contrast with it? His own words have presented this contrast between the prizes for ambition found in the one and the love-service of the other: "ye know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones use authority over them; but it shall not be so among you, but whosoever desires to be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever desires to be first among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Thus the blessed consequences:—

"Even as the morning-light when the sun arises,
A morning without clouds;
From the brightness after rain
The herb springeth from the earth."

No more absolute lordship is there than the sun exercises over the earth, none in its sphere more beneficent. The tenderest plant is served by it. By it the showers that refresh are drawn up from under the whole heaven and rained down again. With it rule is surely service. And the sun is Christ's image, the glory of the light (which God is) upon a material candlestick. But the sun exists not for itself, and the tiniest creature bathes as freely in its brightness as the mightiest.

David's heart is in his eyes as this vision beckons him. He sees clearly that all his glory and the glory of his house count for nothing here. Amnon, Absalom,

[Although] my house be [j]not so with God,
Yet he hath made me an [k]eternal covenant,
Ordered in all and [l]sure;
For this is all my [m]salvation and all of delight,
Though he make it [n]not to grow.
But [the sons of] [o]Belial [shall be] all of them as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken in the hand;
And the man that will touch them provideth himself iron and wood of a spear,
And they shall be [p]burned up with fire so as to cease.

Manifestation. 1. (8–12.) The power of God.

3. [1]These are the names of the [q]mighty men that David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tachmonite, head of the

[j] ch. 12. 10. [k] ch. 7. 16. [l] Is. 55. 5. [m] Gen. 49. 18. [n] *cf.* Is. 6. 11–13. [o] Ps. 9. 17. [p] *cf.* Matt. 25. 41. [q] 1 Chr. 11. 10–25. *cf.* 1 Sam. 22. 1, 2. *cf.* Heb. 11. 37, 38.

have died their deaths of shame; his successor is the child of his own transgression. What hope in nature? None, save from the covenant of the unchanging God:—

"Although my house be not so with God,
Yet He hath made me an eternal covenant,
Ordered in all, and sure:
For this is all my salvation and all of delight,
Though He maketh it not to grow."

For there seems indeed no hope: less and less only as man's history lengthens. The power of sin, the subtlety and might of Satan, have seemed after all divine deliverances and triumphs again to revive and make of the fairest work the saddest ruin. Every successive dispensation has ended in worse failure than the previous one. Does it not seem as if the salvation of the earth, and the long desire of good in it, were a plant which even God "made not to grow"? Could David have looked over the long gap of time since his day, would he have been encouraged with the progress made? No, it is but the covenant, the eternal covenant, that encourages us yet. God must intervene; judgment, long delayed, must come:—

"And the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken in the hand;
And the man that will touch them provideth himself iron and wood of a spear,
And they shall be burned up with fire, so as to cease."

Thus faith and love acquiesce in the judgment which alone can free the earth from its long chain. "Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn uprightness." "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness."

3. We have now the list of David's mighty men, with some special examples of their prowess, mostly against the Philistines. They read, when spiritually rendered, like a leaf out of the book of accounts in the day fast approaching, when every one shall have his praise from God. The words of the apostle, when referring to it, are much more penetrating than appears in our common version of 2 Cor. v. 10. It is not simply, "we must all *appear* before the judgment-seat of Christ," but "we must all be *manifested*." And this is what the record here suggests. Most of it is simply a list of names, which, of course, therefore, as we must read them, stand for *persons*, not merely for *deeds*. And the deeds themselves which are related are such as we realize cannot be exceptional or accidental, but show what the men were that did them. They are, of course, *David's men*, and their deeds are deeds of war entirely. They are not in that way a full sample even of what will come out in the day of Christ. Probably no sufficient sample could be given us. Probably, also, in the condition of the world in which we are, the most characteristic exhibition of Christ's people that

captains. He is the Eznite: [he lifted his spear] against
r eight hundred, slain at one time. r Ju. 3. 31.

could be given would exhibit them as *soldiers*. In their power over the terrible power of the enemy is proved their devotedness to Christ, (against whom all his efforts are directed,) and thus to His people, His representatives in the world. Not that the spirit of strife is the Christian spirit: far from it. The dove would flee far, if it were not held by its affections; and these brought the Lord Himself into the place of sorrow and conflict, who is still the Captain of salvation, and leads His people through fields He Himself has passed through. The very table He spreads for us is "in the presence of our enemies." His love is a banner over us. The inheritance which belongs to us can be attained only by a struggle, not indeed with flesh and blood, but with "principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places." Bye and bye, how the lists will shine with the names of God's heroes whose histories have never been written in this world, but whom the King will greet as friends to Him well known!

When we turn to the record here, however, it is disappointing to find how little we can make of it. The record itself seems as if it had been torn out of the hands of contestants, and come down to us with the marks of war upon it. There are difficulties as to the text, difficulties as to the parallel accounts which we find in Chronicles, difficulties as to the meanings of words and of names. Little meaning of any value seems ever to have been seriously attached to what is here; and accordingly as we find here, the mistakes of copyists and commentaries have been allowed to accumulate, and little believing work has been done to rectify them.

(i.) In the case of the first and highest in rank here, in the single verse which relates his deeds, almost every word is in question. The name, if it be a name, here Josheb-basshebeth, or, as in the common version, "he that sat in the seat," is in Chronicles (1 Chron. xi. 11) Jashobeam, "the people return," or "shall return." The "Tachmonite" is there written "Hachmonite," or rather "the son of Hachmoni," (the wise). The words "he is Adino the Ezrite" are variously read or disputed over. "His delight is in the spear," "his brandishing of" or "smiting with the spear" have been suggested, but the meaning of the last word is quite doubtful, and its strongest support is from the parallel place in Chronicles, where the word used is quite different, "he brandished his spear." If we do not accept this, then the connection with the following words "against eight hundred" has to be arbitrarily supplied. Finally, Chronicles substitutes three hundred for eight hundred.

Out of all this it is hard to gather any meaning fully to be relied on. The text in Chronicles is easy, and the substitution of it as a whole would simplify things; but who can assert that the one passage was ever identical with the other? Names especially varied much among the Hebrews, and seem to have been used with a certain latitude, so that no one could say that Jashobeam and Josheb-basshebeth were not alternative names for the same person. In this case there arises a possible spiritual significance for the foremost of David's warriors so suitable apparently to all the connection, that it claims at least to be suggested. It is the spiritual meaning that should surely give us largest help amid difficulties so great and many as we find in this place.

"One sitting in the seat," (or "abiding in the abode,") is the meaning of the first name here; and the numerical place would easily attach to this the thought of power shown in persistence,—continuance in the place belonging to him. If we think, as we must in connection with the typical meaning, of Christian warfare in its highest character, then we must undoubtedly go to the epistle to the Ephesians for the account of it: thus to that conflict with principalities and powers in the heavenly places, of which the epistle speaks. But as the prelude to this and the necessary introduction to it, Ephesians brings into the place itself which is, as it were, the place of the conflict. God "has raised us up"—with Christ

And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the son of an Ahohite: he was one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were gathered together there to battle, and the men of Israel were gone up. He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was [s]weary, and his hand [t]clave to the sword; and Jehovah wrought a great salvation that day; and the people returned after him only to [u]spoil.

And after him Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite: the [v]Philistines were gathered in a troop,* and there was a plot of ground there full of lentiles, and the people had [w]fled before the Philistines; and he stood in the midst of the plot and delivered it, and smote the Philistines, and Jehovah wrought a great salvation.

2. (13–23.) Fellowship with Christ.

[2]And three of the thirty chiefs went down, and came to David in harvest time, to the [x]cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold; and the

s Ju. 8. 4.
t *cf.* Eph. 6. 17, 18.
u 1 Sam. 30. 24, 25.
v ch. 21. 15.
w 1 Sam. 17. 24.
x 1 Sa. 22. 1.

* Or "to Lehi."

from the dead, says the apostle, "and *made us sit* together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.) Here is undeniably a "sitting in the seat" essential to the highest, that is the Christian, warfare: and the maintaining of this place,—the abiding in it,—is the grand necessity for spiritual triumph. The *place* every believer has. The practical abiding in it,—ah, how little is this to be seen! How few among Christians know the meaning of it! How few among those who know it as a doctrine, know its power in the soul! How few of these, once more, *abide* in the place in which divine grace has set them!

Josheb-basshebeth, then, may well be the Hachmonite, the "Wise," and with that the prince of warriors. Who will question, that know in any wise, what these things mean?

The second name is that of Eleazar ("help of God") the son of Dodo ("his Beloved") the Ahohite (brotherly?) Here, also, Chronicles differs from Samuel. Instead of being only "one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines,"—in which case one would expect the others to be noticed in the action,—Chronicles simply represents him as being "with David at Pas-dammim, and the Philistines assembled there" to battle. Here, however, Chronicles seems to have a gap in the text, which thus ascribes the action of Shammah (whom it omits) to Eleazar. Single-handed, as it would appear from the narrative here, he smites the Philistines till his cramped hand cleaves to his sword-hilt. The people, who were absent from the battle, returned only to the spoil. Thus Jehovah through him wrought a great deliverance; and this the number seems to emphasize.

Shammah's deed, on the other hand, in accordance also with the numeral, is a work of resurrection. The Israelites are not merely absent: they have fled. His own name means "astonishment," and he is the son of Agee, perhaps "sprout," the Hararite, or "mountaineer." Words such as these are capable of easy combination in relation to the lesson of his acts. The power of revival is found in him who has learned amid the difficulties of a rugged path the awe of the God of resurrection.

(ii.) The power of God is manifest indeed in the exploits of these first three; we now find a second three, at first unnamed, but the two names that follow, Abishai and Benaiah, reveal two of the number. The third is unknown, and probably not one of the thirty-one that follow, who thus with these two threes make up the total of thirty-seven given at the end.

Philistines' garrison was then at Bethlehem. And David [y]longed, and said, Oh that one would give me to drink of the [z]water of the well of [a]Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men [b]brake through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it, but [c]poured it out unto Jehovah. And he said, Be it far from me, Jehovah, that I should do this thing! Is it not the blood of men that went in [d]jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.

*y cf.* John 4. 6, 7.
*z cf.* John 7. 38, 39.
*a cf.* John 6. 33-35.
*b cf.* Acts 21. 13.
*c cf.* Phil. 2. 17. *cf.* Phil. 4. 18.
*d cf.* Acts 15. 26.

But this second three should thus have a different lesson for us from the first. Accordingly, while the power of God is still manifested, it is less prominent in these, while the tender sympathy with David shown in the next exploit may well speak to our hearts of Christ's delight in our fellowship with Himself. It is striking, too, that now first we find, instead of merely individual exploits, fellowship with one another. The chivalry of the act (as men would say) is magnificent. There is no common need that appeals to them; there is no danger such as would make men brave a world in arms; David's thirst even could be as effectually quenched with water from many another well beside that of Bethlehem; even that expressed wish would never, with the risk involved in its fulfillment, have been seriously uttered: it was but the sigh of a heart escaping from the burdens and sorrows of late so heavy, back to the days that were, to the fresh breezy hours of simple childhood, and the joys that, after all, never could be revived. It was not the water of Bethlehem, after all, that could satisfy David's soul. Ask him did he really mean it, it would be found but one of those passing illusions by which for a moment a strong man may willingly allow himself to be deceived, but which can last but for a moment. An impassable gulf separates the man of to-day from the child of yesterday: could you bring back the whole surroundings you would accomplish nothing, except you could bring back, as you cannot, the child that moved among them. Bring them back, and you only make him realize the more, with a sharpened pain, that it is only in his sorrow he can be now the child: its joys are passed forever.

They do not stay to think of all this, nor ask if he means it seriously, as he does not. With a devotion sublime in its utter recklessness, they think but that they can give this water he so longs for to the lips of the "beloved" one they serve, and serve now the more joyfully in a service he never has commanded,—which he never would command. What is the Philistine host, that it should stand between David and the well of Bethlehem? The very slightness of the object of desire makes it perhaps seem but the more impossible that it should be denied him. With dauntless heroism they break through the enemy's camp, and the water for which David longed is here: let him drink and be satisfied.

But David dares not drink. The glory of that deed of love falls on him with an awe that humbles as with the sense of the divine presence. This love stronger than death,—this peril of life to gratify but a passing desire of his heart,—he is not worthy of it, must not accept it: God alone is worthy of it, God alone should have it. He pours it out before Him with disclaiming words that come to us with the claim of another "Beloved" upon us, carrying us from type to Antitype, to One human and yet divine, to One who has shown us Himself a love, which is henceforth the pattern of all other: "hereby perceive we love, because He" not risked, but "laid down His life for us." David disappears from our gaze, and Christ our Lord is before our souls.

Passing from type to Antitype, we see how great the contrast is and must be, amid all the resemblance. All that is trivial, passing, mistaken even, and that even in that very character appeals to and affects us in the story before us, can

And [e]Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among the three. Was he not most honorable among the three? and he was their captain; but he did not [f]attain to the [first] three.

And [g]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds. He slew two Ariels of Moab; and he went down also and slew a [h]lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. He slew also an Egyptian, a goodly man; and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; and he went down to him with a staff, and [i]plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and had a name among

e ch. 21. 17.

f *cf.* Luke 19. 15–19.

g ch. 20. 23.

h *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9.

i 1 Sam. 17. 51.

of course have no place in the higher application. Yet this only makes the lesson for us so much the fuller, so much the more solemn, so much the sweeter. Our David has cravings and longings of heart, which need also the water of the well of Bethlehem for their satisfaction;—no passing desires, but, as His nature is, abiding, perfect, necessary to His perfection. Is it not the water, living water, whose spring is at the outgoing of the Father's "house of bread,"—which He longs to receive from us; wherein He finds but the fruit of the travail of His soul, and with which alone He can be satisfied?

Moreover, like this expressed wish of David, which never was a command, nor intended to be, if we are to reach any worthy thoughts at all, we must distinguish between commands that are laid upon us (which there are), and His "word," which shows us what is in His heart, and in receiving which we come into intelligent communion with Himself. So the Lord in His last words with His disciples expressly distinguishes. (John xiv. 21, 23.) Commands may be given to servants only, who are never admitted into the secrets of the heart, but the words which are spoken as to friends claim also response, and will find response, from the truly devoted. Not "what must I do?" but "what *may* I do?" is the expression of attachment to His Person; and so only can we be in sympathy with the act of the mighty three.

But then, if we will act in this spirit,—if we *have* this spirit,—we shall find the world a hostile world to Christ. Yes, and not the *world* only—but right in the way, *barring* the way, to the well of Bethlehem, we shall find the Philistine camp, the host of natural men that have intruded into spiritual things. We must be prepared to break through the intrenchments of tradition, formality, worldliness in religious guise, if we are to gratify the Lord's longing for us. And shall men take their lives in their hand for men after this manner, and the world have its heroes of self-sacrifice, and the love that passeth knowledge have no fit return?

Abishai and Benaiah, as two of these three mighty men, express in their names correspondingly this fellowship with Christ. The "father of gift," as we have already seen, may speak even of Christ Himself in resurrection receiving gifts for men. And there are almost always in these histories secondary applications of such things in which it is shown how those who look on Christ's unveiled face are changed into His image. Thus the knowledge of Christ as the source of gift becomes in us fruitful in forming in us this image. A dewdrop may thus shine with the image of the sun. Nor need we wonder that still what is recorded is a history of conflict. It must needs be so while Satan rules the world.

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada means "Jah builds" with all the perfection of "Jehovah's knowledge"; but the least of His people are called now to be builders too. As to his exploits we may be little able to speak at present. We are moving among things that have been so little supposed in general to contain any

the three mighty men: he was honored above the thirty, but he did not attain to the [first] three. And David set him in his counsel.

3. (24-39.) Names of the thirty.

[3] [j]Asahel, the brother of Joab, was one of the thirty; [k]Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, Shammah the [l]Harodite, Elika the Harodite, Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the [m]Tekoite, Abiezer the [n]Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of [o]Benjamin, Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of [p]Gaash, Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen Jonathan, Shammah the Ararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite, Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of [q]Ahithophel the Gilonite, Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, Zelek the [r]Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, the armourbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah, Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, [s]Uriah the Hittite: thirty seven in all.

God's overcoming of His creatures' sin.

4 And [t]again the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and [u]he moved David against them, saying, Go, [v]number Israel and Judah. And the king said to Joab the captain of the host, who was with him, Go, I pray thee, through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even unto Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may

*j* ch. 2. 18.
*k cf.* 1 Chr. 11. 26–47.
*l* Judg. 7. 1.
*m* ch. 14. 2.
*n* Jer. 1. 1.
*o cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12–14.
*p* Josh. 24. 30.
*q* ch. 15. 12.
*r ctr.* ch. 10. 1, 4.
*s* ch. 11. 3.
*t* ch. 21. 1.
*u cf.* 1 Chr. 21. 1, etc. with 2 Cor. 12. 7.
*v* Nu. 26. 2. Ex. 30. 11–16.

spiritual meaning, that the only wonder is with the light and little labor thus bestowed on them, to have seen so much. More and more, as we learn nevertheless to question, will the answer come.

(iii.) Of the thirty (thirty-one), known only by their names, little can be said also till they have been more minutely studied. Chronicles, it is well known, though giving practically the same list (1 Chron. xi.), with additions at the end, differs yet very considerably when we come to details. It is just in such lists as this also, dry and barren as they have been suffered to remain through our negligence, that we may expect to find textual errors abounding. There are evidently many, though variations in lists in general identical are, of course, not necessarily such. Let the people of God study His word; dig deep, and expect much; and we shall soon have few such utter gaps in our knowledge as for the present we have to lament here.

4. We end with the *divine* overcoming of man's sin,—a suitable and beautiful ending for such a history. God is the great Overcomer. The Lamb is the perfect expression of this, and in that double way in which God works, governmentally and in the nearer personal action of His grace. Both things we find in the chapter before us.

The state of Israel is such that God is provoked to anger against them, and out of this comes the thought which God permits to be suggested to David, to number the people. It is a military order, clearly having respect to their strength for war, and which shows the spirit dictating it, a spirit in which king and people shared alike. The victories abroad, the growth of a petty kingdom hardly able to preserve its independence of the nations round it, into an empire,—had no doubt intoxicated them with pride and ambition. And pride is the giant sin of a fallen nature, the essential evil, man lifting himself up, even against God. It is the typal sin, therefore; and against which God must, in very mercy, show

know the number of the people. And [w]Joab said unto the king, Jehovah thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, a hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? But the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. And they [x]passed over Jordan, and encamped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the midst of the valley of Gad, and toward Jaazer. And they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon, and came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites; and they went out to the south of Judah, unto Beersheba. So when they had gone all through the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days; and Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king. And there [y]were in Israel eight hundred thousand warriors that drew sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

And David's heart [z]smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto Jehovah, I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now, I beseech thee, Jehovah, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. And when David arose in the morning, the [a]word of Jehovah came unto Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith Jehovah, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. And Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of [b]famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou [c]flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or shall there be three days' [d]pestilence in thy land? now, advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the [e]hand of Jehovah, for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.

w *ctr.* ch.14. 1, 2.

x Josh 18. 9.

y *cf.* Nu. 26. 1, etc.

z ch. 12. 13.

a ch. 12. 1.

b ch. 21. 1.

c Josh. 7. 4–8.

d Num. 16. 46–50.

e *cf.* Heb.10. 30, 31, with Heb. 13. 6.

Himself. He therefore exhibits it, and smites upon it. So plainly is it manifest, and yet so blind is the one actuated by it, that Joab sees at once the evil which David cannot see. He demurs to the numbering, shirks it as far as possible, but is overborne by the king's mandate. The sum of the people is delivered to the king; and only then does his conscience awake to the meaning of what he has done. Little, after all, would it seem in man's eyes; but God seeth not as man seeth.

Word comes, therefore, to David through Gad his seer, offering him his choice of three modes of chastisement: three years of famine, three months of flight before his enemies, three days of pestilence. The number is that of divine holiness and manifestation. David beautifully chooses (yet how could he do otherwise?) to fall into God's hand, the mercies of which he knows; and the pestilence comes upon the land.

And Jehovah sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed; and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beersheba, seventy thousand men. And when the [f] angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, Jehovah [g] repented him of the evil, and said unto the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thy hand. And the angel of Jehovah was by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David spake unto Jehovah, when he saw the angel that smote among the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these [h] sheep, what have they done? let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an [i] altar to Jehovah in the threshing-floor of Aranjah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as Jehovah commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him; and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face toward the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come unto his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto Jehovah, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king

[f] Ex. 12. 23.
[g] Joel 2. 13, 14.
[h] Jonah 4. 11.
[i] Ju. 6. 24.

The blow is heavy, for it is needed; and yet rightly has David counted on his Lord. It is from the Lord's own grace that the staying of the evil comes. "When the angel stretched forth his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, Jehovah repented Him of the evil, and said unto the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thy hand. And the angel was by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

Government has done its needful work, and now the story of divine grace begins. And where should grace be shown as God would show it, but in the case of one of the chief of sinners? Araunah is a Jebusite, one of the Canaanite races of the land, long since under the curse, and a Jebusite, a "treader down" of God's royal city.

Now God was treading down; not ruthlessly as a destroyer, however, but as threshing is accomplished under the feet of the patient ox, where, with all the roughness of the process, the precious grain is sought and secured,—God's harvest, if man's the blessing. Judgment thereafter goes not beyond the "threshing-floor." There it halts, stayed by the pity of God, and Araunah ("filled with lamentation"?) receives his divine name *Aranjah*, "the singing of Jah"! How gloriously is the Lord's story of God's reception of His prodigals anticipated here!—a joy, not of man, but of God: "He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with *singing*"! What music, touching all the chords of nature with the ecstasy of its blessedness, and penetrating with its divine sweetness all the harmony that it awakens round, this music in the heart of God! What a close for a history such as this has been! God's victory it surely is, over man's sin,—over man's enmity and pride and unbelief. God is God, and all that man has done against Him only has brought out the more the meaning of this. Not in Israel alone, not alone in the full tide of the earth's praise hereafter,—no, not alone in the songs of the redeemed in heaven, will be the sufficient answer to this, which shall fill the universe of the unfallen also with ceaseless joy and praise. The throne of God shall be thus forever also the "throne of the Lamb."

take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here are oxen for burnt-offering, and the threshing instruments and the implements of the oxen for wood. All doth Araunah, O king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, Jehovah thy God accept thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay, but I will surely [j]buy it of thee at a price; nor will I offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God of that which doth cost me nothing. And David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto Jehovah, and offered [k]burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. And Jehovah was entreated for the land, and the [l]plague was stayed from Israel.

[j] Gen. 23. 4.

[k] Lev. 1. 3, etc.

[l] Nu. 16. 48.

If the glory of God be seen in its splendor in the Jerusalem of God, the Lamb shall be the lamp of its display.

To one who knows the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and yet how God by this very inefficacy only pointed men forward to the true offering that was yet to come, it will not be strange to find that David does not here offer sin- or trespass-offering. Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings only are enjoined and offered. The place of offering is purchased for fifty shekels of silver, in which we once more see the full responsibility of man recognized, and the debt to divine government completely met. David for a moment here stands forth again as the type of Christ our Lord, meeting, as alone He could, the whole claim of God, the whole due of sin. Thus the book closes fitly, with the lustre of such a vision for the anointed eyes of faith.